An inspiring travelogue of its own kind written by an eminent Sufi Shaykh who is steeped in both Eastern and Western lores of knowledge with an admirable engineering background and uncanny brilliance.

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By

Hazrat Maulana

Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandi Mujaddidi

Translated By

Muhammad Aslam

Maktaba-Tul-Faqeer

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میں بندہ ناداں ہوں مگر شکر ہے تیرا
رکھتا ہوں نہاں خانۂ لاہوت سے پیوند
اک ولولۂ تازہ دیا میں نے دلوں کو
لاہور سے تا خاکِ بخارا و سمرقند

(اقبال)

"Although I am an unwise earthling, yet thanks to God I am in touch with the mysteries of Divinity. I have given a fresh fervour to hearts right from Lahore to the soil of Bokhara and Samarkand." ___ Iqbal

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A Word by Translator

Hafiz Zulfiqar Ahmed is a great soul having global dimensions. Both East and West remain his beat for conveying the message of love and peace to humanity. To be sure, it far exceeds the limits of too small a man like me to attempt to weigh up the hugeness of his illumined soul and his uncanny brilliance. What is more, his divinely-inspired travelogue, *Travelling Across Central Asia*, gives us providential evidence on his wonderful psychic gifts. He may be likened to a floating iceberg whose massiveness remains hidden under the sea-water and only a tip of it appears on the surface.

Shouldn't we call it a marvel of human achievement that a stranger makes a whirlwind tour of the entire Central Asia as well as Moscow, Leningrad and other Russian cities and during his three-month sojourn abroad multitudes of people, including outstanding religious personalities, engineers and scientists, stream into his discipleship? What is more, four of his disciples from Central Asia, who happened to stay with me for a few days, told me how their fellow-countrymen were swept off their feet by the supernormal spirituality of the Shaykh. Newspapers brought out special supplements on him and his interviews were sent out over the air.

Steeped in both Eastern and Western lores of knowledge, the eminent Shaykh has to his credit a long list of academic degrees. Interestingly, a highly talented engineer, a

linguist, a religious scholar, an author of dozens of books and, above all, a towering but unassuming Sufi Shaykh, all have fused into his multi-dimensional genius. The fusion of religious and scientific traditions with the Shaykh has indeed invested him with a rare equilibrium of heart and intellect. However, what is overtopping is his unusual humility which imperceptibly dilutes the argument of a captious mind imputing an inflated ego to his guileless soul.

The Shaykh, Hafiz Zulfiqar Ahmed, gives a simple and unadorned account of the events which took place during the course of his journey across the lands of the former USSR. Obviously the travelogue is not a book of sermons and religious discourses yet it miraculously grips the heart. Undeniably a supramundane aura does prevail in the book and one may be tempted to compare it with the famous Arabic classic, the Arabian Nights, which is pervaded by its supernatural phantasmagoria. Yet, on the other hand, what marks the travelogue is a totally objective truth with events, places and names being real and factual unalloyed by any streaks of phantasy and fictitiousness. It appeals to the minds of minors and adults alike.

Reverting to our point, many readers revealed to me that while reading the original Urdu text of the travelogue they were spontaneously moved to tears. Let us see how its English version will come upon readers. Perhaps it will have a different impact on English readers though the insightful ones, I presume, will be able to read between the lines.

To my delightful surprise Hafiz Zulfiqar Ahmed chose me for the English rendering of his travelogue, maybe he had

in his mind my long journalistic experience. Yet I have had my days and now I am yesterday, thanks to the ravages of diabetes and old-age effects. I also gratefully acknowledge the generosity of the Shaykh that he turned a blind eye to the delay I had made in finishing the task in due time.

Candidly speaking, it will be a reflection on my sense of gratitude if I fail to mention here the name of Prof. Mohammad Aslam, a dedicated deputy of the Shaykh, who was indeed the driving force behind this project. With his heart flush of the spirit of fellow-feeling he never tired of projecting my image in the eyes of the Shaykh to evoke his goodwill for me. He was also kind enough to bring me into contact with a gem, his promising disciple Noor Mohammad, who did the composing job in a true spirit of altruism. May Allah reward both of them for all their good intentions!

Here an unavoidable reference intrudes upon my pen. On the eve of Eid, Ist January 2007, a sad incident of burglary took place in Mr. Noor Muhammad's house. The enormous loss of valuables also included a laptop which contained the whole text of this book. Luckily I had a spare copy of the text which had to be fed into the computer through a scanner and it involved the risk of mistakes, as it did, to overtax my weak health. Yet thank God that under the charismatic influence of the Shaykh the seemingly uphill task of reshaping the book turned out to be much less demanding and perhaps spiritually more rewarding. In the new situation it devolves upon me to tell the reader that aside from the generous help extended by

my worthy friend Col. Nazar Mahayyuddin, Mr. Asadullah and Mr. Abdul Qayyum Khan, a disciple of the celebrated Shalbandi Baba, have co-operated with Mr. Noor Muhammad in a way that spontaneously wins one's praise. The unexpected arrival of Raja Muhammad Umar, a brilliant law student, was a very welcome sign as I desperately needed someone to come to my help to get me out of the quagmire of lingering word processing. With his computer skill and command of English he indeed did a meticulous job with regard to the proofreading of two hundred typed pages. No doubt like the above-mentioned names he has earned my heartful gratitude.

Above all, my wife Abida Aslam has a special claim to drawing upon my sense of gratefulness in a different way, of course. She has single-handedly, though gracefully, put up with all that I have been putting on her shoulders all along. To be sure, her fortitude against all odds has enhanced her image in the sight of Allah as well as in my eyes.

To revert to the point, I have no claim to the command of English which is not my mother tongue. The reader is requested to take a liberal view of language inaccuracies or printing mistakes, if any. Doubtless the approving nod of the Shaykh----symbolic of Divine pleasure---- to this intellectual effort is something I have eagerly dreamt of.

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A Word by the Publisher

Divines and theological books tell us that there are some chosen men of God who enjoy the good graces of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and by virtue of this privilege they themselves become the embodiment of blessing for humanity. In other words they are an intermediary link for the transmission of Divine grace to human beings. Going by this logic one finds Hafiz Zulfiqar Ahmed Naqshbandi as the elect of the elect in contemporary society. Indeed by visiting town after town and country after country he is blazing Allah's love in the hearts of men the world over. He never halts for a rest because life means to him a perpetual journey. The following Urdu verses graphically portray his peculiar situation:

صبح چلتے ہیں شام چلتے ہیں
عشق والے مدام چلتے ہیں
ساتھ ان کے چلتی ہے یوں دنیا
جیسے پیچھے غلام چلتے ہیں

(They walk in the morning, they walk in the evening. The love-oriented men walk without a

break. People go along with them like slaves who docilely walk behind their master).

Hafiz Zulfiqar Ahmed, a self-effacing saint, often tells friends in a light mood, "Every country is my own country." For him the panorama of day and evening changes too swiftly. Mostly his morning is in one country, evening in a second country and again early dawn in a third country. An Urdu poet says:

جہاں میں اہل ایماں صورت خورشید جیتے ہیں
ادھر ڈوبے ادھر نکلے ادھر نکلے ادھر ڈوبے

"Faith-oriented men live in the world like the sun; popping down and resurfacing intermittently continues with them.

So embarkation and disembarkation remain the abiding feature of the Shaykh's travelling life. To be sure, these travels are not merely a matter of movement in the usual sense. Rather owing to the special favour of Allah even his briefest travel spiritually benefits a lot of people. If we count the exact number of the countries which our patron saint has visited so far, it will make a long list. It looks irrelevant to mention them here.

We repeatedly requested the great Shaykh to publish the narrative of his travels in the form of a book so as to benefit the common man. But owing to his humility he would reply, "Brother, the duty of a postman is to deliver the mail, and I

am doing that." Yet one day our request was more emphatic with an emotional tinge: "Sir, you may be metaphorically true in your statement, but we deem you to be the representative of God's Favourite ﷺ. If you have an access to him, he is the object of our pursuit. Kindly do set your pen to paper and articulate some of the Prophetic favours and blessings which have been showered upon you. This will be enrapturing to you and will also flame up a sense of yearning in our hearts. At long last one day he came under a sweeping mood and started writing what he had done and experienced during his visits to Russia and the liberated Muslim Republics of Central Asia. The unfolding of his photographic memory kept expanding the contents of this travelogue. The flow of his fluent pen easily took afresh in its compass what had taken place eight years ago. Despite his preaching engagements and extremely busy life he penned down 300 pages within a few days.

As a matter of fact the self-effacing Shaykh has concealed much of his spiritual experience. Had he dilated upon all that, the size of the present volume would have snowballed to large proportions. Yet being thankfully content with his outpourings, we have readily taken steps for the publication of such a rare document. We do hope the travelogue will gain favour with the reading public.

The general reader will perhaps pleasantly find the tone and tenor of this book somewhat different from the genre of

literature which burdens the mind for its instructive and pedantic thrust. The book is kaleidoscopic of different voices of human experience--literature, history and preaching and travelling narrative--- yet a marvellous, spontaneous and refined flow of expression runs through it. All this constitutes a commendable merit of the book and one's heart goes out to praise the versatility of the author's genius. Lastly let me tell the reader that apart from its pervasive influence the whole of the book will make an enjoyable reading at a stretch.

Dr. Shahid Mahmood Naqshbandi
Maktabatul Faqir, Faisalabad.

PREFACE

Praise be to Allah and He sustains everything. And peace be upon His slaves whom He has chosen!

Morshed-i-Alam (our Grand Shaykh Khawajah Ghulam Habib) would tell us: "A journey gives one hell yet it brings success and relief in its wake."

I visited the Muslim Republics of Central Asia more than once. Friends constantly urged me to commit my impressions and observations to paper in this regard. Since I was conscious of the paucity of my knowledge, I kept evading their request. But even after the passage of about seven years there was no let-up in their tenacity. Rather their demand became more pronounced till I put my pen to paper in the Name of Allah. Whatever glided into my mind, I exactly reduced it to writing. I however particularly kept in view the idea that the narration should be couched in simple and easy language so that it may profit even a small schoolboy. This travelogue, I presume, will be more interesting, educative and rewarding for the general public instead of ulema.

This preface, I am afraid, has no scope for stretching things In conclusion I would earnestly request readers to pray for my redemption in the hereafter.

Faqir Zulfiqar Ahmed Naqshbandi Mujaddidi

23 March 2000

Mekkah Mokarmah

CHAPTER 1

THE BACKGROUND

Going back to February 1992, I happened to deliver the Friday sermon at Bahadarabad-based Jame Masjid Uthmaniah, Karachi. During the speech a reference ran to the miserable plight of the Muslim community and I said:

“Today the diabolical forces take it easy to swallow up the Muslim community like a meal laid on the dining-table. Today unbelievers have the Star Wars programme at their hands, whereas we resort to resolutions. Today unbelievers command the Patriot missiles, instead we register appeals in answer to it. But why have we sunk to the lowest level, is a question to us. Why has our religious sensitivity and self-respect touched the moribund point? Have Muslim mothers not suckled us? If only we would use our wits and come out of our ivory tower to see how undauntedly the anti-Islam nations are showing off their brutal force. Yet on the other hand we have pitiably fallen into a deep slumber.

Worthy audience, time is knocking at our door O Muslims! wake up, wake up, wake up! Those who fail to wake up today will be trampled to non-entity by non-Muslims. At that time the enemy would be standing at our threshold. Then, God forbid, our blood would be shed like water in the tradition of Chinghis Khan. The enemy aircraft would be rattling in our airspace and the booming of guns would leave us dumbfounded and terror-stricken. Our bodies would be crushed under the tanks. Women would be handled roughly. The chaste young girls would be raped in the presence of their parents. The survivors would be subjected to humiliation and debasement and brought under slavery. Deplorably it would be a moment of extreme shame and abashment for us and we would prefer death to life. Then we would regretfully wish if only we had heeded the call of time and put our lives at stake for the renascence of Islam instead of slumbering peacefully.

Worthy audience, today the world situation is changing rapidly. On the one side the Eastern countries, right from Japan and Korea to Singapore, are promoting trade ties among themselves and visualizing the Great East. On the other side the Western countries have so closely linked up with each other that many of them seem to be the parts of a single city. They are dreaming of the Great West by taking to the common currency of Eurodollar. O Muslim youth, rise and gird up your loin without fear. Then see what comes from

God to your help. Rise, take the banner of Islam in your hands and proclaim to the world:

Neither East nor West, Islam is the best.

Worthy audience, it is an undeniable truth that when God wills He gets an eagle killed by sparrows. By His blessing a minority overpowers a majority and a weak person defeats a powerful one. If we cling to the Qur'aan and step forward, success will greet us. Time demands of us:

"Lift up every lowly person by the force of love. Illuminate the world by Mohammad's name."

There was a time in the past when Russia was known to be a Superpower. But the real Superpower of Allah disintegrated it into pieces. Today look at Russia. She has reduced from superpower to zero power. If a glass vessel breaks, it emits a sharp crashing sound. Surprisingly, a huge country broke up but without even a thud. Believe me, if all the world powers had joined together they could not break Russia into so many fragments as she has done with her own hands. Have we not witnessed this miracle with our own eyes? The newly-liberated Muslim Republics of Central Asia may perhaps play their role in the renewal of Islam. We are apt to generate a climate of harmony and unity in our ranks as says the Poet of the East:

"From the shore of the Nile up to the steppes of Kashghar the Muslims should protect the House of God like one man."

Worthy audience, if we the Muslims get united the ity will dawn upon the diabolical forces that we are indeed a hard nut to crack and to gnaw us away is not so easy.

After the Friday Prayer Mr. Saeed-uz-Zafar, the Director of the Pakistan Steel Mills, said to me, "Hazrat, you should make a tour of Central Asian Republics so that gaps among Muslims narrow down. It is an urgent need of time." Replying positively I said, "God willing." Mr. Abd-ush-Shakoor Dada, Chief Executive, Dada Sons Ltd., said, "A friend of mine has been doing business in Russia for a pretty long time. I will manage to get a visa through his help." I said, "All right." So I gave over my passport to him and came back to my hometown. I kept waiting for the visa for so many days. One month later I came to know that there were some obstacles in the visa endorsement. After another fifteen days I was told that the obstacles still stayed. I got worried and kept praying to Allah to that end till Mr. Munir Ahmed sent me a letter from Karachi.

LETTER

My reverend Shaykh,

I am OK by the grace of God and pray to Him to learn a good news about you. First of all I must express regret and apologise for my lethargy and indolence that I could not write

to you earlier. Being conscious of your engagements I don't want to waste your precious time. Yet I have felt the need of your guidance.

On 10th Ramadan-ul-Mubarak I was sitting in meditation after *Tahajjud* (non-obligatory midnight) Prayer. I felt as if the meditation was being conducted by you and nobody else was in the room. I heard a voice which asked me, "Who is he?" I replied, "He is my spiritual guide Zulfiqar Ahmed." The voice uttered, "Convey to him the Holy Prophet's message that he should go to the Soviet Union (Central Asia) for 75 days." Kindly guide me on it by return post.

Yours humblest & worthless disciple,
Munir Ahmed.

I was totally taken aback by reading this letter. Munir Ahmed was absolutely ignorant of my future programme and yet he mysteriously hinted at it. A thought came into my head that when Allah wills something, He gets it done through the humblest and lowliest one of His creatures. No surprise if a humble and good-for-nothing fellow like me is led to do the preaching job. The next day I received the information that the Uzbekistan visa had been stamped in my passport. When I mentioned this matter to a Sufi friend he said, "In the past the spiritual affiliation (Energy-line) of the Naqshbandiah Order had come to the subcontinent from Central Asia. Now it

appears that Allah has chosen you in modern age to repay the obligation. There should be no delay in doing a good thing."

Though encouraged I thought it fit that in order to satisfy myself I should consult Shaykh Wajihuddin who enlightened me on Sufi Path in early stages. I reached the Engineering University of Lahore and described my situation to him. The Shaykh read the letter under reference and said, "Brother, it speaks of a very good news. You must go."

One of the gentlemen, present on the occasion, said, "O Shaykh, he is going there to repay the obligation." The Shaykh said, "We had linked up with the Naqshbandiah Order through Central Asia and later Shaykh Ahmed Sirhindi, popularly known as Imam-i-Rabbani Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani, added more lessons to it. Now he will go there with the blessing of a refurbished Naqshbandiah Order." I was overjoyed to hear it. What an Urdu poet said was true to my situation:

"I and flower-fragrance are two poles apart. O breeze of morning, thou has done me this favour."

Beginning in the Name of Allah I took a long leave from office and embarked upon the journey.

Map For Common Wealth Of Independent States Of Russia

JOURNEY TO UZBEKISTAN

It was on Wednesday, 22 April 1992, that I left Lahore for Central Asia. Elders say that when the beginning of something is made on Wednesday it turns out to be auspicious. Some ulema refer to a Tradition in this regard and perhaps it is for this reason that teaching in Pakistani religious Madresahs is begun on Wednesday. The flight from Lahore to Karachi was comfortable as usual. I delivered the Friday sermon at the same Karachi mosque mentioned in the previous chapter. When friends came to know about my scheduled journey they were jubilantly full of prayers for me. We reached the airport on Saturday only to learn that the flight from Uzbekistan was yet to arrive. So there was no question of departure. The passengers were told at inquiries that the next flight would take off from Islamabad to Tashkent on Monday, and one whose point of destination was Tashkent should go to Islamabad. I reached Islamabad through a PIA flight and stayed with Prof. Mohammad Aslam. Again on Monday I got ready for the journey and reached the airport. After the check-in I was given the

boarding card and going through immigrational process I stepped into the lounge. When in spite of waiting for about an hour there was no announcement of the departure I got ruffled a bit. In the meantime it was announced since the fighting between two belligerent groups in Afghanistan had intensified the plane could not take off on account of the closure of the airfield. The passengers were requested to stay in a hotel under PIA arrangement. This touched off gossiping among them. Some gave vent to their anger, some took it in a light vein, while others started discussing the situation from all points of view.

Meeting with Russian Delegation

Meanwhile, a handsome young man approached me and said, "Do you know anyone of the Tabani Group?" I had hardly uttered the name of Mr. Yaqoob Tabani that the stranger instantly embraced me and spoke up, "I am serving as manager at the Tashkent office of the Tabani Group. My name is Abbas Khan and I am already well informed about you. Please let me introduce you to some of the personages from Central Asia." He introduced me to those who stood nearby and included Mr. Habibullah, Foreign Minister and ex-President of Uzbekistan, and Tourism Minister Anwar Saeedov. I also informed them about my professional and academic sides as well as my religious pursuits. Mr. Jamal Kamal called me a Perfect Man and Mr. Habibullah

expressed his heartfelt pleasure by uttering, "Long live Zulfiqar!"

Mr. Abbas Khan proposed staying in the guest-house of the Tabani Group instead of the hotel. Because, apart from a quiet atmosphere, comparatively better facilities would be available there, he said. Everybody smilingly welcomed the idea and hence we moved into an elegant guest-house of the posh part of Islamabad. To my enlightenment the distinguished guests provided me with the following data about Central Asia: "The frontiers of Central Asia meet the icy plains of Russian Siberia in the north, while Iran and Afghanistan are their meeting-points in the south. On the one side its vast territorial expanses extend to the frontier of China, and on the other side reach up to the coast of the Caspian Sea. The Oxus river flows between Central Asia and Afghanistan. The people of the subcontinent therefore call it the cross-river (Transoxania) territory and in Arabic it is known as *Mavara-un-Nahr*.

This territory consists in the verdant and fertile land of Syr, Kara, Zarafshan and Amu rivers containing abundant deposits of gold, silver, uranium, gas and oil. Cotton is grown in its plains and gardens on both sides of roads remain laden with fruits. If on its one side stand the snow-capped Pamirs and on its other side spread out the vast and enormous deserts of Turkmenistan as well.

Since in the past the Silk Road meandered through this area of Central Asia, it has been of strategic importance from military and economic angles. Understandably adventurers and expansionists have always been tempted to make it an object of their incursions too.

Alexander the Great had ruled over Central Asia three centuries B.C. ago. In the 7th-8th century A.D. it witnessed the spread of Islam through Arabs. In the 13th century Chinghis Khan rose from Mongolia like an atrocious thunderstorm and played havoc with the life-pattern and civilization of this region. In his wake came Amir Timur and Zaheeruddin Babar who deeply impacted on the history and civilization of the subcontinent. Strange are the ways of Providence that a land markedly characterized by a religion-oriented culture and civilization once again came under the thumb of non-Muslims as a result of Tsarist aggression in the beginning of the 19th century. For seven decades Communist ideology prevailed there. At last in the end of 1991 Allah bestowed upon its people the blessing of freedom and the sun of Communism sank for ever."

To me the information was not only interesting but it also served as an eye-opener. Tales of the rise and fall of nations are the best weapon to stimulate and open closed and insensitive minds. To tell the truth, the food served to us over lunch and dinner seemed less savoury than getting to know things about Central Asia.

Next morning we were again told that there would be no flight today. The news particularly piqued the passengers bound for Central Asia. Some of them were to attend office and they felt as if they would be held back for an indefinite period of time. Mr. Habibullah, ex-President of Uzbekistan, suggested that we should preferably fly to Moscow via Karachi and then go to Tashkent from Moscow. All the people liked this suggestion. When they wanted to know about my opinion, I said that it was a good idea and they should go. They said, "Don't you want to go?" I replied that I had no visa for Moscow. Mr. Tash Mirza, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan, smilingly said, "Give me your passport, I will get the visa stamped within no time." Mr. Abbas Khan sent for his driver and gave my passport to him with the Ambassador's message for the Visa Counsellor that the needful should be done immediately as the passport-holder was to travel along with him (the Ambassador). When the driver came back he divulged in the presence of everybody the grumbling of the Counsellor whom he quoted as saying, "Neither this man is the President nor the Prime Minister of any country. Yet I have been summoned from home on holiday to stamp the visa." When I looked into the passport I found that a three-month visa was stamped in it, permitting me to visit Moscow as well as other parts of Russia. I thanked God and felt relaxed. I thought that the dream about 'a 75-day visit to the liberated Republics' seemed to be coming true.

The delay in the PIA flight turned to be a blessing in disguise for me. I performed two non-obligatory cycles of Prayer as a token of gratitude to Allah. God made the three-month visa stamp as easy for me as it looked difficult normally.

The Virgin Flight

The Karachi-bound flight took off from Islamabad on Saturday, 2 May 1992. I travelled in the First Class along with the Central Asian delegation too. I preferred night stay at the residence of Shaikh Muhammad Yaqub instead of a hotel. Friends of our circle came gathering there. Most part of the evening was spent in talking about the Naqshbandiah Shaykhs. So sweet and delightful is the Name of Allah that even the mention of those, given over to His remembrance, seems enjoyable and soothing to hearts. Somebody asked Junayd Al-Baghdadi, "It is said that the mention of the men of God is comforting to hearts. Do we have the Word of God on it?" Junayd recited the following Qur'aanic verse:

وَكُلًّا نَّقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنبَاءِ ٱلرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِۦ فُؤَادَكَ

"(O Muhammad!) We narrate these anecdotes of Messengers to you so that We may strengthen through them your heart." (11:120)

On 3 May 1992 we landed at the Karachi Airport early in the morning. We were glad to learn that a flight of the

Uzbekistan Airline had already arrived there from Tashkent. That very flight was to carry passengers from Karachi to Tashkent. On reaching the counter we found there the banner of Virgin Flight. Shaykh Irani recited the following Qur'aanic verse:

إِنَّا أَنشَأْنَاهُنَّ إِنشَاءً فَجَعَلْنَاهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا

"Lo! We have created them a (new) creation. And made them virgins" (56:35-36),

Then he addressed me to say, "God would also give virgins to His beloved ones in paradise. Whereas in the world too you are lucky enough to travel in a virgin flight from Karachi to Tashkent." Thank God I was privileged to be the first Pakistani who was flying for a religious purpose. In the whole flight I was the only passenger who wore a religious look. More than half of the aeroplane seats were empty.

Loose Talk of an Atheist

The plane had hardly taken off half an hour ago that a Pakistani sitting in the nearby seat began conversation with me in these words, "A few years ago I had come to Russia to get engineering education. On reading Darwin's theory it was revealed to me that religion had no basis in itself. Human beings have taken to ways to get on with their sorrows and pleasures. Ulema simply read theological books. The poor fellows know nothing about the world. They are themselves

misled and also mislead others. Maulana, you should study science so that you may know reality. By the way may I ask you for what purpose you are going to Central Asia?". I told him that I was going there to see my fellow-Muslims. He said, "They have a scientific outlook. Most probably you are not aware of even the ABC of science. What will you then do there?"

Being impatient with the provocative talk of the godless youth I had to throw light on my academic background and this made him completely nonplussed. After remaining silent for a few minutes he said to me, "I never expected that people like you also get science education. Kindly forgive me. Well, there is a question on my mind. Please give me an answer to it. The question is how those who recite the Qur'aan without understanding it can be rewarded?" I said to him, "A Tradition tells us that the Qur'aan reading, regardless of knowing its meanings or otherwise, is rewarding in either case." He said, "Reward on reading without understanding hardly makes any sense to me. Please argue convincingly in support of it." I said, "Well, tell me if anybody reads `Kaf~, Ha~, Ya, A'in Sad' will he be rewarded?" He said, "Yes, because it is the word of Qur'aan" When questioned about its meaning he said, "We have not been told the meanings of *muqatta'at* letters." On it I commented interrogatively, "If we are rewarded for reading these letters without knowing their

meanings, why should not the same rule apply to other Qur'aanic words?"

Shifting his position the young man said, "Please tell me one thing why is obligatory Prayer said in Arabic and why can't we say it in our own tongue?" I replied, "Deeds have a graded hierarchy of their own. For example, praying is an act of Sunnah and it is allowable in everybody's own mother tongue. But since the saying of Prayer is an obligatory act it must necessarily be done in the same way as the Holy Prophet ﷺ did. Had people been allowed to say it in their respective mother tongues it would have lost both its form and spirit after the passing of 1400 years. The Ummah would have set it to music instead of saying it verbally. That could subject the whole worship system to disruption." He said, "Maulana, in my view you are a very intelligent person." Upon this I remarked, "And in my view you are an extremely foolish person. You were born in a Muslim family but your stay in Russia robbed away your religion. I wish your mother had not born you." My calculated words struck the atheist's heart like a bolt from the blue and tears welled up from his eyes. "Maulana, repenting of my sins I want to embrace Islam anew," he said. I thanked God in these words of Qur'aan:

وما كنا لنهتدى لولا ان هدانا الله

"We could not truly have been led aright if Allah had not guided us. (7:43)

Meanwhile, the airhostess announced: "We are about to land at the Tashkent Airport." I began uttering the Testification of Faith (There is no deity but Allah).

Advice of a Sage

Sayyed Zawwar Hussain Shah, an eminent Naqshbandi Sufi, used to say that air mishaps often took place during take-off or landing. Hence he advised passengers to begin reciting *Kalimah* (the formula of the Testification of Faith) on both these occasions. "None knows it might be one's last flight", he would say. Indeed when an accident occurs one has no time to utter the Testification of Faith. We may doubly benefit from our turning to Allah for a few minutes. Firstly, we shall be rewarded for the remembrance of Allah. Secondly, if an accident takes place we, as goes a Tradition,

من قال آخر کلامه لا اله الا الله دخل الجنة

(one on whose lips will be the Testification of Faith at one's last moment shall be admitted to paradise),

Will die in a state of faith. Such spiritual occurrences are only the peculiarity of gnostics transcending the minds of the masses.

Stay at Tourism Hotel

As soon as I came out of the Tashkent Airport I was chilled by the currents of icy wind. Mr. Abbas Khan took me to the Tourism Hotel where I was provided a luxury suite by the Director of Tourism on the order of Tourism Minister Anwar Saeedov. The staff of the Tabani Group gave me a dinner. On this occasion I met Mr. Dada Khan Nuri, a friend of Mr. Abbas Khan, who was a poet and man of letters and spoke Urdu fluently. He had brought with him home-cooked pulao. Soon after the conversation began he asked me if I would like to see the Grand Mufti of Tashkent. I nodded in agreement. "I'll pick you up from the hotel room in the morning", he said. After taking my meal I offered the Isha (evening) Prayer and prayed to Allah,

"O Lord, I have no friend, no companion here. I am alone here. But You have said in the Holy Qur'aan وهو معكم اينما كنتم (4:57): (And He is with you wherever you may be). So when You are with me, do not hand me over to my soul and Satan and give me support on every step. Even a gnat may serve Your purpose if You want. Shorn of resources, knowledge and religious practice though I am, I humbly beseech You to pick me up for the propagation of the Naqshbandiah Order. But ultimately Your Will shall prevail. You do not accept people on their merit but by Your choice."

I kept supplicating to Allah till a sense of satisfaction descended upon my heart that I would enjoy His support and help. I fell asleep in my bed while reciting the prophetic prayers.

Visit to the Grand Mufti

It was at 10 a.m. on 4th May 1992 that Dada Khan Nuri took me to the head-office of the Tabani Group. There I got a king-sized map of Central Asian Republics so that it may be an easy job for me to concentrate my spiritual influence on the people of the territory to be visited by me. Dada Khan Nuri said to me, "You have been silently looking at the map for quite some time. Can I be of any help to you?" I replied, "No, thanks. You simply arrange my meeting with the Grand Mufti, please." Dada Khan Nuri said, "The rank of the Grand Mufti is equal to a federal minister. He sits in his own secretariat and it is quite a job to see him. But currently one of his books is under my revision. As soon as I reach there, the meeting will take place." I remarked, "Quite like that sinners will be able enough to see Allah on the Day of Judgment on account of their love for the virtuous people, resulting in their redemption." Dada Khan Nuri laughingly said, "You see a religious side in everything." On it I observed, "Someone asked a hungry person what two and two made. 'Four loaves' was his reply. Similarly, I seek exoneration in the hereafter. So to me everything refers to the

hereafter." He was much pleased to hear that. On the way he said to me, "How do people in Pakistan address you?" I said, "Mostly people call me Hazrat."

"Hazrat, we may pick up Halimah Khan from a nearby place, if you please", Dada Khan Nuri said. "Who is she?" I asked. "Just like Pakistan's Melody Queen Nur Jahan, who is known to all and sundry, Halimah Khan is the most popular TV artiste of Uzbekistan. She is the favourite of everybody here. She is conducting a Haj-related TV programme of the Grand Mufti and he has called her. It will become far easy for you to deliver sermons in the local mosques. The Halimah factor will prompt the Grand Mufti to allow you forthwith to do so", he observed. "All right, as you deem it fit. I won't mind her taking the back seat", I replied. Within a few minutes we stopped at the gate of a large, spacious bungalow. As soon as she heard the horn blaring she immediately came out and in response to Dada Khan Nuri's gesture she took the back seat of the vehicle. Both of them kept talking in the Uzbek language for some time. All of a sudden she touched my shoulders from behind. When Dada Khan Nuri saw me lean forward out of embarrassment he said, "Hazrat, I have introduced you to Halimah Khan. Overpowered by devotional feelings she has touched your clothes so as to receive your blessing." I felt that after touching my clothes she kissed her hands and passed over her face. I was surprised to think that despite her sinful life she had a deep regard for a religious

scholar, and that might cause her transformation and moral uplift. Meanwhile, the vehicle halted in front of a huge building. Dada Khan Nuri said, "Hazrat, it is the Talah Shaykh Mosque." I came out of the vehicle. Due to severe cold I was wearing a long coat with a staff in my hand. Dada Khan Nuri said to me, "Hazrat, Halimah Khan wants to know why you are holding the staff. Are you suffering from rheumatism?" I replied, "No, I keep it as a mark of Sunnah. Even otherwise (says Iqbal):

عصا نہ ہو تو کلیمی ہے کار بے بنیاد

'The work of Moses, if rodless, is just a futile thing'

Dada Khan Nuri was much pleased with my reply and asked me to walk before them. On entering the building I came to know that it was an office where the permission of officers was needed at every step. A visitor was interviewed by several officers and, if necessary, he was sent to the Assistant Mufti. And if the latter pleased the visitor was led to the Mufti. Halimah Khan had hardly entered the room when she took up the telephone receiver and told the Mufti that she wanted to see him along with a religious scholar. He ordered his staff to show the visitors in his office immediately. An official led us through different rooms and verandahs into a magnificent office. A gentleman welcomed us at the door. Dada Khan Nuri told me, "Hazrat, he is our Grand Mufti

Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yousaf." The Mufti warmly received us. Then he seated us in the chairs and entertained us with tea. First he discussed with Halimah Khan the Haj programme and then had a conversation with Dada Khan Nuri. At last he talked to me in Arabic, asking me about the country I belonged to and the purpose of my visit to Uzbekistan. I replied in poor Arabic that my aim was to disseminate the light of the Naqshbandiah Order in his country. On learning it the Mufti was seized by excitement and said to me, "Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmed Naqshbandi, we are just desperate for this blessing. You are free to deliver your message anywhere in Central Asia. You are free to instruct people, to conduct spiritual sittings and to illumine the hearts of our ulema with the light of the Order. Indeed we shall be immensely grateful to you for it. I am just leaving to attend a meeting to which about 40 Muftis from different districts of Uzbekistan have been invited. I will tell them to let you conduct your programmes in their respective places. When we left the office of the Grand Mufti a guide took us into a conference hall where Muftis from 40 districts were present. On my appearance they cheerfully met me individually. Dada Khan Nuri introduced me to them and also conveyed to them the message of the Grand Mufti. All spoke out in unison, "The programmes should be conducted in our areas. We are ready." One of them said, "I heartily welcome the idea." I told Dada Khan Nuri, "The opportunity is ripe. Please chalk

out a programme just now, so that I may be able to tour all these places in 20 days." He told Halimah Khan, "Let you show Hazrat the Uthmani script of the Qur'aan and in the meantime we try to draw up the programme."

Madam Halimah Khan told me, "Please come with me and I will have you view the Uthmani script of the Qur'aan." I told her, "Instead of walking before me, you should walk behind me but keep guiding me about the way." She instantly asked me, "Why so?' I replied, "This is what the Qur'aan teaches us. When Prophet Moses (A.S), left for Prophet Shu'aib's home he asked his daughter to walk behind him so as to avoid glancing at her body which was forbidden to him." Halimah Khan was seized with a sudden wave of joyous surprise, saying, "Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmed Naqshbandi, such people still exist in the world!" I said, "Madam, this is all the result of my spiritual director's edifying efforts." Meanwhile, we reached a big gate which was locked. She told me, "Shaykh, I just sent for the concerned supervisor so as to unlock the gate." A boy brought a chair from a nearby building. "Hazrat, instead of standing you may please sit in the chair for a while", Halimah Khan said. I sat in the chair and she stood behind me. The boy went to the nearby houses and called out children. Within a few minutes about 40 to 50 children came raising slogans, "Halimah Khan, Halimah Khan." They surrounded both of us and talked to Halimah Khan about her TV programme. One

of them asked her if I was her father. "Yes, he is my spiritual father", she said. A small girl told Halimah Khan, "That man is gesturing you to go to him." Halimah Khan turned her face to that side and told me, "Shaykh, the door has opened and you can have a look at the Uthmani copy of the Qur'aan. I would like to talk to these children for some time."

A View of Uthmani Script

When I entered the Tala Shaykh building a young man told me that it was a repository of hundreds of rare printed and script-copies of the Holy Qur'aan. Uthman's handwritten copy was the most rare. It was a Qur'aanic copy written on leather. Caliph Uthman رضي الله عنه had got it prepared during his reign of caliphate and he used to recite the same. Earlier this copy was present in another country but when Amir Timur conquered different countries he brought it to Samarkand. When the Russian Revolution took place in 1917 this copy was placed in the Leningrad Museum. Following the liberation of the Central Asian Republics from the Soviet yoke the Uzbekistan Government made a strong demand to Moscow that it should be returned to them. Accordingly, this Qur'aanic copy was brought to Tashkent with deep respect and reverence and placed in this building. Two doctors are deputed to check the room's temperature and the quantity of moisture in the air and keep spraying different chemicals over this rare manuscript so as to save it from erosion.

When I saw this historic copy of the Qur'aan the passage written in the Kufic script was illegible to me. After pondering long enough I was able to understand two words, جبريل و ميكال (Gabriel and Michael). Then I started reading orally and the construction of the words became clearer and clearer to me. When I came to the words, فسيكفيكهم الله '(But Allah will suffice thee against them) (2:137)' I found there a stain. I was told that when Caliph Uthman was martyred the blood emitting from his body had left this stain. Glory be to Allah! On the Day of Judgment the earth will bear witness to the martyrdom of somebody and a stone will bear witness to martyrdom in another case. But as for Uthman Ghani's martyrdom the Book of Allah will stand witness to it. For a time I kept looking at this inestimable relic with an overwhelming sense of reverence and devotion. In the meantime, Dada Khan Nuri reached there and told me, "Hazrat, programmes about the Ferghana valley have been drawn up. It is too late and we should go home now." I took the front seat along with Dada Khan Nuri, while Halimah Khan seated herself behind me. On the way she was insistent that I should stop at her home for a while and have a cup of soup. But it was a Prayer time and I was also unwilling in my heart to eat or drink something at her home. I, therefore, regretted my inability to comply with her request and preferably went straight to the Tourism Hotel. Next day Halimah Khan sent me a message that she wanted to telecast

a TV programme on me. I replied, "Our elders tell us to shun the limelight instead of seeking it. So this thing can't be done."

City of Stones

Dada Khan Nuri, while returning from our visit to the Grand Mufti, was kind enough to show me some of the well known buildings of Tashkent and furnished me with the following data about Uzbekistan.

"Uzbekistan has a central place in the Republics of Central Asia. It has a population of 20 million with an area of 1.58 lakh square miles. The descent of the Uzbeks can be traced back to the Mongol Khans whose rule at one time extended from Russia to Kiev. During his reign Amir Timur left such a lasting imprint of culture and civilization which even after the passage of seven centuries is still reflected in the beautiful mosques and splendid madresahs of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. If it gives the Uzbeks a sense of pride that theirs is the homeland of conquerors like Timur and Babar, it equally boosts their vision of destiny to think that traditionists like Imam Bukhari, Imam Tirmidhi and Imam Abu Mansoor Matoreedi, Sufis like Shaykh Bahauddin Naqshbandi, poets like Ali Shair Nawaee and scientists and philosophers like Avicenna, Al-Biruni and Al-Farabi have historical roots in Uzbekistan.

Dada Khan Nuri also took me to the building which had witnessed the Tashkent Declaration between Ayub Khan and Lal Bahadur Shastri after the 1965 Indo-Pak war, thanks to the efforts of Soviet Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin. Tashkent, or "Ti'een Shi'een", meaning at the foot of the heavenly mountains, is a 2000-year-old city which exists in the valley of the Charchak river. At one time it was called the city of one thousand forts. Speaking etymologically, Tashkent (Tash-qand) is an Uzbek word-*tash* means stone and *qand* means city, that is to say the 'city of stones' It is also believed to be the locale of the love folk-tale, Shareen-Farhad. Now if you look at Tashkent's tall, splendid buildings, wide roads, crossing-fountains and beautiful parks, you can hardly believe that it is so old city. After Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev it was the fourth biggest city of the former Soviet Union. Tashkent was the first Asian city where the underground railway was built. The underground railway stations have been made of marble in such a way that they remain invulnerable to an earthquake.

Stay in Ferghana Valley

Dada Khan Nuri told me that the Ferghana valley was his ancestral land and also, as mentioned above, the birthplace of Babar. It is the most fertile land of Uzbekistan and reputedly associated with celebrities. What is more, the famous Muslim jurist, Qazi Burhanuddin al-Marghinani

(author of Hidayah) was also born here. Marghinan, Naminghan, Indjan and Qoqan are the well-known cities of this valley. When Dada Khan Nuri came to know that I was determined to embark upon a journey to Ferghana he became eager that he should accompany me too. He told me that he would take me to the Ferghana valley.

We departed for the Ferghana valley at 11 a.m. on 7th May 1992. We had to pass through the snow-capped mountains. We stopped our vehicle at a place and got out of it to witness a bewitching snowy panorama all around. The cold was so severe that the hand didn't get wet by taking snow in it. The icy winds were blowing. I tried to walk on the snow for quite a while. After resuming the journey we broke it at a place which was the residence of a friend of Dada Khan Nuri. There we performed our noon Prayer and had our lunch. At about sunset we reached the Marghlan valley which presented to eyes a scene of abounding greenery, flowers and fruit-laden trees. I spontaneously uttered the following Qur'aanic verse

لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكَنِهِمْ آيَةٌ جَنَّتَانِ عَن يَمِينٍ وَشِمَالٍ

"There was indeed a sign for Sheba in their dwelling-place: two gardens on the right and the left. (34:15)

On entering the city we went straight to a mosque where at the very sight of me the muezzin motioned me to lead the

Prayer. After saying the Prayer the worshippers sat down round me as if to attend a special sitting. The imam of the mosque, Mufti Abdurrehman, told me that they were keen to listen to my exhortative talk. I agreed and spoke in Urdu, while Dada Khan Nuri turned my utterances into Uzbek. During the talk the participants kept uttering appreciative phrases to my encouragement. In the end Mufti Abdurrehman took me to his home where some of the worshippers also reached. Discussion continued on the dining-table and I was the night guest of the Mufti. After the dawn Prayer I chose to put my discourse into Arabic and Mufti Abdurrehman beautifully translated it into the Uzbek language. People were all attentive to it and thereafter I conducted a meditative sitting. After the performance of *eshraq* (supererogatory) Prayer I was an invitee to a breakfast feast given by a local. Since all the ulema and Shaykhs of the area were also invited to it, I had the good luck to meet them.

It is a well-established custom with the Uzbeks that they help wash the hands of their guests before serving food to them. Furthermore, they would raise their hands in prayer on joining or leaving an assembly. When a guest prays, his host would rise and respectfully utter and repeat the word, '*rahmat, rahmat*' (blessing, blessing), placing his right hand on the chest as an expression of love. Then they lay the table-cloth on the ground and place the bread pieces on it along with various kinds of dried fruit. They keep pouring a small

quantity of milk-free tea into cups and drink it instead of water. Pulao is a favourite Uzbek dish. Large bowls filled with meat and soup are placed before guests. The Uzbeks usually put bread pieces into these bowls and make *sureed.* There goes a Prophetic saying, "*Sureed* is superior to other dishes as Aishah (Prophet's wife) is superior to other women." In the end comes the dish of kababs. The Uzbek principle is to eat meal slowly and in a relaxed way. A guest who is unaware of this principle and eats meal hurriedly, will go on eating till he unsettles his stomach.

Centrality of Naminghan

Naminghan, 500 miles away from Tashkent and standing on the other end of Uzbekistan, is a large city. From the geographical point of view there are two reasons for its importance. First, in the east it is close to the Kazakhstan border; in the south it is near Kirghizstan and in the west it meets Tajikistan. No doubt the growth of an Islamic movement here can spill over across the three neighbouring Republics. The seekers of religious education come here and sit at the feet of the local ulema. On finishing their education they return to their native places and carry on their religious activity in accordance with the instructions of their teachers. Another reason for the importance of Naminghan is the well-rooted group of pious and God-oriented local ulema. Each of its districts has many madresahs which have a direct bearing

on its surroundings. In Naminghan some women, with veiled faces, can be seen moving about in the streets, whereas this scene is nowhere in sight in the rest of Central Asia. Elsewhere they would cover their head but keep their face open. The city of Naminghan is fairly large and beautiful with its outer suburbs also being well-populated. As for the interior of the city some of its quarters have old and narrow streets. This exception being apart, wide roads, modern buildings and commercial and industrial establishments invite attention almost everywhere in the city. Cypress, pine and fruit trees stand on both sides of the roads.

Naminghan is situated on the bank of the Syr River. On the other side of the river stand the remains of a fort built by Emperor Babar's father Umar Shaikh Mirza. Zaheeruddin Babar was born in this historical fort and remained there till the age of seven years. But when his father fell down from the fort's wall and drowned in the river both he and his mother started living with her parents. And when Babar grew up his fighting instinct and destiny took him to India. There is a place near Naminghan where the confluence of Syr and Kara rivers takes place. This Timurid scion who grew up in the Syr-Kara valley was destined to bring the Ganges-Jamna valley under his rule.

A large oil deposit has been discovered near Naminghan. When the oil-well was dug up, oil welled forth with such a gushing force that it became unmanageable.

Consequently, a big lake of black oil formed up round this place. Now oil is pumped out of it and carried through huge tankers to the refinery. Dada Khan Nuri's eyes brighten up at the sight of this oil-lake and he preferably calls it 'lake of gold.'

A reformist movement, namely *Adalat* (Justice), has emerged in Naminghan under the leadership of Rustam Jan Naujawanov. Its primary aim is to sand off the rough edges of society by impressing upon delinquents and undesirable elements the need to understand and practise religious teachings. The *Adalat* brings the misled youth to the mosque where they are given lessons on the fundamentals of the Qur'aan. On being equipped with the sense of direction they mend their ways and get back to the fold of society as regenerated souls.

Blessings of *Nisbat*

When we entered Naminghan, Maulana Rustam Jan had already sent his affiliates to receive us on four points --- the airport, the bus station, the Madresah Arabiah and the gate of the central (Makhdoom Aishan) mosque. We had the madresah address. When we reached there the students gave us a warm welcome. It was Friday and the Prayer was about to start. We performed our ablution and got into the mosque for Prayer. I delivered a speech and Maulana Rustam Jan rendered it into the Uzbek language. According to the

estimate of Dada Khan Nuri, there was a gathering of five thousand worshippers. Inner purification was the subject of my speech. On hearing about the doings and sayings of the men of Allah the gathering came in the grip of overwhelming emotions. There could be no words to match their excitement. When I delivered the Friday sermon in Arabic, the force of the *nisbat* (Energy-line of the Order) had its telling impact. Tears could be seen rolling down the cheeks of the listeners. I also led the Friday Prayer. Complying with the request of Maulana Rustam Jan I initiated the whole gathering into the Naqshbandiah Order and conducted the meditative sitting. After the Prayer the worshippers swarmed over me for handshake. They would have lynched me, had some young men not fenced round me. Some people were touching my clothes, arms and other parts of my body and then passing their hands over their faces to receive blessing. Yet within my heart I was telling my carnal soul, "O wretch, look at your black deeds in contrast with the compassion of your Lord Who has kept them hidden from public eyes. People are not praising you, instead they are praising His graciousness." When the local Shaykhs moved forward along with their respective groups of disciples, the young men let them get in through their fencing. At the sight of their illumined faces I was overpowered by devotional sentiments and kissed their hands, while they kissed my forehead. Those who witnessed this inspiring scene, started uttering aloud the Name of Allah.

All this made Dada Khan Nuri feel proud and overjoyed that he had the honour to introduce a guest who had given so much delight to the ulema and pious souls of the area. When the crowd thinned out after some time the young men led me into a nearby closet.

An Irritant

The ulema and Shaykhs joined us soon. Some of them pronounced aloud the Qur'aanic Verse

سيماهم في وجوههم من اثر السجود

(The mark of them is on their foreheads from the traces of prostration.) (48:29)

Some of the visitors requested me and to pray for them and I complied with their desire. In the meantime a Westernized man entered the room and sat beside me like a Grand Shaykh. When someone asked me to pray for him, that fellow instantly started praying aloud and then told the supplicant that the prayer had been done for him.

Then all of a sudden the odd man began to blurt out a homely. I asked a gentleman, "Who is this fellow?" He whispered in my ear, "He is a religious scholar from Turkey but without a beard. He freely mixes up with women, not caring for Shariah injunctions. But Ankara has sent him for preaching purpose. On the liberation of Central Asian Republics the Western countries, apprehending lest Muslims

here should start practising Islam on Saudi or Pakistani lines, raised funds for Turkey so as to help finance the preaching activities of its ulema in the newly-liberated States. Its government was told to build mosques and madresahs and project the Turkish model of Islam among the Muslims of this land. So a few hundred Turkish ulema have entered different parts of Uzbekistan. As an expression of hospitality to our guests we condescend to listen to them. Yet we do things according to our own understanding."

When the Turkish scholar kept speaking for some time one of the audience told him, "We listen to your talk daily, please let us listen to the advice of this Pakistani Shaykh." Yet instead of respecting the liking of the audience, he showed indifference to it. This had a boring effect on everybody. When I saw that he, disregardful of social behaviour, had disappointed the audience, I exerted my attention on his heart. Within a few moments he rose to his feet and left the audience. Everybody felt relieved. Thank God, the money-oriented intellectual effort, spreading over several months, was instantly wiped away by the blessing of overpowering *nisbat* lights as says the Qur'aan

وَاللهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَىٰ أَمرِهِ وَلٰكِنَّ أَكثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعلَمُونَ

"And Allah is dominant in His purpose but most men know not. (12:21)

Reality and Shadow

Next day a group of local ulema came to see me. Many of them were directors and administrators of madresahs and Imam-Khateebs of mosque. They had such a superb mastery of Arabic as if it was their mother tongue. I acknowledged before them that I had poor knowledge, adding that I could understand their conversation though I was not well-versed in Arabic. I told them that despite my deficiency in Arabic I would try to reply their questions. Dada Khan Nuri was away on a visit to his relatives and I lacked the help of another translator. The host laid out dried fruits on the table. The guests kept eating it and the table talk also continued. Maulana Daud Khan, the aged and erudite among the visiting ulema, put questions to me about the Pakistan situation. His tone grew harsh when he told me, "The people of Pakistan had achieved their country by raising the slogan of *Kalimah* (Declaration of Faith). But despite the passage of 45 years (at the time of the author's visit), the Shariah is yet to be implemented there. What has happened to the ulema there? Have all the people fallen into deep slumber?" I replied that the ulema were endeavouring for the enforcement of the shariah. But Maulana Daud Khan remained dissatisfied with my reply. Then he put another question to me, "Why have you come here"? I told him that the purpose of my visit was to disseminate the Naqshbandiah *nisbat*. He said more harshly, "Has this job been accomplished in Pakistan that you

have come here?" I replied, "A servant or a postman has no choice of his own. He simply obeys an Order. I have come here following some spiritual promptings. If you are displeased with my arrival here, I am ready to go back."

Seriousness and silence prevailed over the audience for a few moments. Maulana Rustam Khan urged me to say some exhortative words. In compliance with his request I spoke on the subject of piety and also spiritually concentrated on the hearts of the audience. Tears welled up from the eyes of some people. Maulana Daud Khan began to weep bitterly. In the end of my address he moved forward and apologetically told me, "Being unaware of your spiritual rank I talked to you rudely. Please forgive me." Saying this he put his hand on the pistachio-kernels which lay before him and remarked, "O Shaykh, you are like this" and then putting his hand on the pistachio-husks which also lay before him, he said, "and we are like this." Thereafter he started crying loudly like a child. He was sitting glued to my feet; finally he put his head in my lap and started weeping so loudly that people from the neighbouring houses rushed out to see what had happened. The audience were wailing of like mourners and I was trying to help them regain composure. Maulana Umar was repeatedly pronouncing the Name of Allah aloud and was constantly weeping. The sombre mood of the audience continued for quite a while and I kept consoling them. Maulana Umar said, "Hazrat, we want to sit at your feet in

Sufi path." I accepted all of them in discipleship and hence Allah made an opening for the dissemination of the Naqshbandiah *nisbat*. After administering the initiatory oath to all the ulema I individually put my forefinger at everybody's heart and gave it light strokes by pronouncing Allah's Name, telling them how to sit in meditation. When I told them to have a meditation for a while, they began to sob their hearts out. After the meditation all the ulema invited me to visit their respective madresahs.

I accepted the invitation. Thank God, a convoy of seven cars took all the participants, to different madresahs of the city. Everywhere I delivered a speech in my poor Arabic, and on each occasion madresah students were also initiated in the Naqshbandiah Order. Maulana Umar said, "Hazrat, you are the unanimous Shaykh of the Uzbek ulema. They have, for the first time, agreed on a single personality. Thank God, we shall also visit you in Pakistan to take lessons in Sufism." "That will give me sheer pleasure", I said.

Prior to the Russian Revolution there were 1000 mosques in Naminghan, but the Communists had put ban on all of them except for the two major ones. Thank God, now all the mosques were under reconstruction, 22 of them had started the Friday Prayer and the rest of them were being rebuilt. I was taken to some places where I prayed for Divine blessings. God, in His infinite mercy, raised a group of seekers on the very first day. Now I was saved the help of

Dada Khan Nuri to introduce me to people as well as the need of a vehicle for travelling purposes. When Dada Khan Nuri took notice of this new development he told me, "Hazrat, be good enough to become my guest for a dinner tonight and thereafter the ulema will be free to take your anywhere they will like." To come to the point, I found delicious Uzbek dishes on the table. The roast meat had particularly a savoury taste, so I ate too much of it. When I wanted to go to sleep Dada Khan Nuri managed to lay out some dishes on the tab beside my bed. On my enquiry about it he replied, "If yo wake from sleep at night, you can have the rest of the food."

Madresahs of Indjan

When a distinguished Shaykh of Indjan, Adil Khan heard that Naminghan ulema had taken to the Sufi path he was overjoyed. He dispatched a special representative to me with the invitation that I should visit Indjan. I accepted this invitation and reached there accordingly. I prayed the noon Prayer in the madresah's mosque and met the teachers and the students. Afterwards a young religious scholar, Maulana Abdul Qahhar, started explaining the meanings of Qur'aanic verses and his audience consisted of hundreds of worshippers. His radiant face spoke of his blessedness. When he finished his lecture, a man announced before prayer that a Pakistani Shaykh would deliver a sermon. I was nearing the pulpit and the arch when I felt that Maulana Abdul Qahhar looked sullen

as if I was an unwelcome visitor in his sight. I started explaining verses of the Qur'aan and he became my translator. Thank God, the lights of the *nisbat* galvanized the hearts of the audience. When I finished my address, Maulana Abdul Qahhar was the most eager of all to be initiated. As for the audience, no words could match their excitement. In the end Maulana Abdul Qahhar took me to his home where he arranged a sumptuous feast. After taking meal he told me, "Hazrat, would you like to take rest or visit an under-construction madresah and pray for its early completion? Its trustee has already taken an initiatory oath at your hands in the mosque." I replied, "I haven't come here for rest but have come for work. My Shaykh would always lay emphasis on maximum work and minimum rest. I also follow the same rule." However, all the people riding in vehicles reached a huge, spacious building, namely, Madresah Imam Athim. Two large-sized cranes were fitted here and the construction work was feverishly afoot. The underground chamber was so vast that we were almost exhausted by walking from one end to the other end. It seemed so tedious to go round the whole madresah at a stretch. It looked less of a madresah and more of a university building. On my questioning as to how many students could be accommodated in it, I was told that four students could be lodged in a room. Whereas by Pakistan's standards even eight students could stay in it.

Hafiz Abdul Jalal, the son of the Madresah trustee, was so impressed with my discoursing that all the time he held a tape recorder in his hand and instantly taped any words which dropped from my lips. I told him, "Admitted, sermons and discourses should be taped. But what is the motive behind taping every talk?" He weepingly replied, "Hazrat, we would listen to your words and try to recollect as to what you had spoken on a particular occasion."

After praying in the Madresah complex we went to the house of Haji Abdus Salaam to take meal. The host had also invited the notables of the Indjan city. Thank God, a post-dinner sermon briefly delivered by me brought many people in the Naqshbandiah fold.

Maulana Abdul Qahhar told me, "Hazrat, Allah has invested you with the power of vanquishing hearts. It was unthinkable that even people with low credibility rating would join your following." I said, "How can a humble man like me claim such a merit? It is indeed the excellence of the All-Powerful Who graciously accepts even sinners for the promotion of the Faith." During the conversation a religious scholar told me, "Hazrat, you are requested to lead the *Isha* (evening) Prayer in a mosque which is situated in the nearby locality of Asakah." I told Maulana Abdul Qahhar, "I am here only a stranger. You'd better advise me on it." He replied, "Hazrat, I 'll myself go there with you. Please give the programme."

Discovery of Two Jewels

After the sunset Prayer Maulana Abdul Qahhar took me to Asakah where on the insistence of people I led the shortened evening Prayer but the locals had to complete it. Thereafter I delivered a sermon. Maulana Abdul Qahhar began to say, "The arrival of Ḥazrat here is an inestimable blessing for us. Long before I had intended that I should become a disciple of some Shaykh but none appealed to me. Hazrat has completely vanquished my heart through his spiritual attentions. I have taken the initiatory oath at his hand, rather I have surrendered myself to his will unconditionally." Having said this he spread out his turban and told the audience if any of them wanted to be initiated they could seize the cloth. This spurred the audience and all of them seized the cloth. Within the sweep of the eyes all looked prepared to be initiated. With the initiatory oath being over I explained the invocatory formulas and practices of the Naqshbandiah Order and conducted a brief contemplative sitting. During it I read out the following Persian couplets:

مومنا ذکر خدا بسیار گو

تا بیابی در دو عالم آبرو

"O believer, remember God excessively so that you may be honoured in both worlds.

ذکر کن ذکر تا ترا جان است
پاکی دل ز ذکر رحمان است

"As long as you are alive, be engaged in the invocation (of Allah) because the purity of the heart comes from the remembrance of the Beneficent.

یک چشم زدن غافل ازآں شاہ نہ باشی
شاید کہ نگاہ کند آگاہ نہ باشی

"Don't be neglectful of the Lord even for the twinkling of an eye. Lest He should look at you graciously but find you inattentive."

ما ہرچہ خواندہ ایم فراموش کردہ ایم
الا حدیث یار کہ تکرار می کنیم

"We have forgotten whatever we read but repeat again and again the words of the Friend."

On hearing these couplets the audience began to writhe about on the ground like a slaughtered animal. There was such a distressing volume of weeping and wailing that even an outlooker would not help feeling pity for them.

When the meditative sitting was over Maulana Abdul Qahhar told me, "Hazrat, you will be the guest of my friend Maulana Hakim Jan tonight." He introduced me to Maulana

Hakim Jan and Maulana Abdullah who were standing beside me. The two told me that they wanted to remain with me throughout the journey of Central Asia. When I glanced at Dada Khan Nuri he observed, "Very well, first we were two, and now we shall become four. As for the locals, they keep coming and going." When I looked closely at the two men, their faces revealed sign of blessedness. To quote an Urdu couplet:

مرد حقانی کی پیشانی کا نور
کب چھپا رہتا ہے پیش ذی شعور

"The light of a peasant's forehead can hardly escape the insightful eyes."

In the coming days the two friends indeed proved to be two jewels, and my relationship with them, I hope, will ensure my redemption on the Day of Judgment. A Persian poet has said;

شنیدم کہ در روز امید و بیم
بداں را بہ نیکاں بہ بخشد کریم

"I have heard that on the day of hope and fear (the Last Day) Allah will also give pardon to sinners for their contact with the pious."

Ideal Hospitality

When I approached the living place of Maulana Hakim Jan I found, to my delightful surprise, a brand-new sheet of white cloth spread over from the full length of the street to the interior of his house. I asked him why the cloth had been spread. "So that you may enter the house by walking over it", came the reply. When I wanted to take off my shoes, Maulana Hakim Jan told me to walk with my shoes on, "Such an exalted personage is on a visit to our place that if it were possible, we would not have spared laying our eyelashes on the ground to welcome him."

Finding the host too insistent I had no other way than to reach the house by walking over the white sheet of cloth. The house was big and spacious with its courtyard being full of grapevines and fruit trees and the sweet-smelling flowers had made the atmosphere fragrant. The well-decorated and comfortable rooms wore a pleasant look. The roast mutton was laid on the table at night. When the other people left late at nihgt, Maulana Hakim Jan and Maulana Abdullah told me, "Hazrat, we want to massage you. Kindly allow us to do so." In view of their keenness I okayed. This private sitting continued pretty late, during which I asked my host seriously, "Maulana, you have attended some meetings today. Please tell me as to why people are increasingly joining the Naqshbandiah fold?" Maulana Hakim Jan replied, "Hazrat, a year back some eminent Shaykhs were engaged in promoting

the Order in Uzbekistan. But within months they have died one after the other. Since then the ulema and pious men have been constantly praying to Allah to find a perfect Shaykh for their moral uplift. Your appearance on the scene have been taken by them as an undreamt-of blessing. Small surprise, they are joining the Naqshbandiah Order group after group." I felt ashamed in my heart to think that I was too small a man yet people thought of me so highly. The heart prompted me to take the occasion to imagine the greatness of God. Indeed I have no words to express my gratitude to God Who lavishes His gifts and blessings upon a wretched man like me to raise my credibility in the public eye.

Qoqan Governor's Feast

On 11th May 1992 we set out from Indjan and reached Qoqan at 1 p.m. My stay was managed at the State Guest-house with elaborately luxurious arrangements. All that was enough to make me uneasy in my mind as we the dervishes have nothing to do with rulers. Yet I kept in mind the precedent of Khwaja Saifuddin Mujaddidi for dissemination of the sublime Order. So I kept eying all that in silence. I kept mulling over the train of attendants and luxury goods laid out on all sides and took them as a false allure for the test of my resistibility. I was praying in my heart: "O Allah, lest I should be put to a test by You." I had hardly felt so uncomfortable on any occasion in my life as I did on that day. I was really on a

weeping-point but restrained myself for the presence of other people. So I confined myself to the heart's weeping. The following Urdu verse spontaneously came on my tongue:

دنیا میں ہوں دنیا کا طلبگار نہیں ہوں
بازار سے گزرا ہوں خریدار نہیں ہوں

"I live in the world yet I am not in pursuit of it. I have simply passed through the bazaar, I am not a buyer."

A delegation of the local administration called on me and I gave them a few words of advice. All of them were very impressed when they came to know about my engineering education. I initiated them into the Naqshbandiah Order and identified the *latifa-i-qalb* (subtle-point of Heart).

A Moving Scene

The Qoqan city has a grand building which once housed the headquarters of the local Communist Party. In it the Qoqan Governor arranged a programme for women. I therefore went there along with Dada Khan Nuri and Maulana Abdullah. The security arrangements were such as one witnessed on the entry-point of a treasury. The local ulema told me that I was the first Muslim in seventy years to enter this building which served as a nucleus for the spread of unbelief. "This very place will become a vehicle for the

spread of the religion, God willing", I replied. My problem was these women didn't understand English and the same was my position with regard to the Russian language. However, I gave a brief talk and Dada Khan Nuri did the job of rendering. This was followed by a question-answer session which continued for about one hour. The nature of the questions largely betrayed the Communistic thinking of the women. Some of the women asked me why Islam treated woman as a second-rate citizen. I answered the questions in simple words and also made their minds the focus of my spiritual attention. Thank God, all the women asked me how they could pass a good life. I persuaded them to embrace Islam and they took an oath in that regard. The moments were so moving that the ulema were weeping bitterly. Strange are the ways of Providence that the very place which played the pivotal role in the spread of Communism was being used by a humble fakir like me to bring people back to the fold of Islam by making them pronounce the *Kalimah* (the formula of the two Testifications of Islam). Indeed it was a strange scene. A local religious scholar wished if all the Communists would see it:

تو نیز بر سر بام آ که خوش تماشائیست

"Let you also come to the rooftop to see a pleasing scene.

In the end of the meeting the women's impressions were quite encouraging. Most of them observed they could hardly

think of such Pakistanis who would be equally proficient in religious and modern branches of knowledge and would cause our turning to Islam. Of course, this comes only from Allah's grace.

Pulpit Voice Broadcast

After the Isha Prayer I was scheduled to give a talk at the Shahi Mosque. It is the only mosque of Uzbekistan which has a100-foot high minaret. It was fully crammed with people. The imam of the mosque told me, "People in the mosque as well as women sitting at their homes will be listening to your talk today." I asked him, "How is that possible?" He replied, "We have called in the radio station staff to record this programme which will be relayed to almost ten thousand Muslim homes of this city." The imam inaugurated the programme by recitation from the Qur'aan which was followed by my talk. Since Dada Khan Nuri had acquired prowess in translation, he enthusiastically translated what I spoke. When I finished my talk, so many people were ready to take the *bay'ah* (initiatory oath) that it became just impossible to spread the cloth to that end. So I had to pronounce the initiatory words on the loudspeaker and the participants repeated them. When the programme was over and people rushed forward for handshake, things became unmanageable. People crammed the mosque and the madresah building. When we left the mosque we found that

the outside crowd outnumbered the inside gathering. In fact a vast multitude on the road had caused the traffic jam. Some ulema gathered round me and took me out of the mob. Some people standing at a distance flung away an end of their cloth towards me. When the cloth touched my body, they kissed it. Grand Mufti Khan Sahib told me, "Hazrat, never have so many people assembled here to see even a Prime Minister as they have assembled today." As an expression of gratitude for the Divine blessing I read out the oft-quoted verse of Urdu poet Jigar:

میرا کمال عشق میں اتنا ہے اے جگر
وہ مجھ پہ چھا گئے میں زمانے پہ چھا گیا

"O Jigar, the excellence of my love is only this much that He prevailed upon me and I prevailed upon the world."

Return to Tashkent

Next day we returned to Tashkent. On hearing from Dada Khan Nuri the journey account, Tabani office secretary Azizah asked him how many new disciples I might have recruited during this journey. "To be accurate, about fifty thousand people could have joined the Naqshbandiah Order", came the reply. When Tabani heard this account, he too showed his intention for entry into the Path. Consequently he joined the Order on 15th May 1992. I wanted to stay in

Tashkent for some days more to spread the message. It was through Abbas Khan that my Qur'aan recitation and a few speeches were broadcast by the Uzbekistan Radio. Some local newspapermen interviewed me and highlighted the details of my journey on the front page of the newspaper. I think Dada Khan Nuri supplied them with these details.

Urdu School of Tashkent

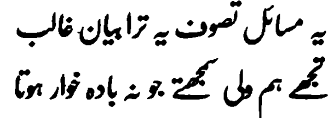
In Tashkent there is an Urdu school with N-156 being its mark of identification. Here children are taught Urdu. One day its Principal, while tracing my address, reached the Tourism Hotel. She told me, "We have come to know about you through the newspaper. Kindly accept our invitation to visit the school and benefit the children by your words of advice." I told her that I would reach the school any time which would be convenient to her. On May 16 I reached the school along with Dada Khan Nuri. The Principal and the teaching staff were already present at the school gate. The school children read out the welcome verses and I too responded with words of gratitude. They put me different questions for about half an hour and later they related tales and sang verses and songs for two hours. In my speech I informed the children about Pakistan's historical and geographic dimensions. Particularly I related to their amusement the events of the history of Islam regarding children. The teaching staff gave their opinion that for the

first time in their life they had heard such an informative address delivered to children. Also they arranged an elaborate dinner in my honour.

In the end the Principal thanked me and said, "If you name any Pakistani school we shall establish an educational link with it. Every year two boys from each side will be visiting each other's schools on reciprocal basis so as to strengthen cooperation between the two institutions." Later the children offered me garlands of flowers. I asked Dada Khan Nuri, "What is this?" He replied, "It is *haar*" (meaning both garland and defeat in Urdu). I told him, "No, never. It is *jeet* (Victory)." Dada Khan Nuri much enjoyed my pun on the two Urdu words and said, "Hazrat, be good enough to visit my home just now. *Pulao* will be ready there. After eating it I'll drop you at the Tourism Hotel." I told him, "If you are already determined, I won't hurt your feelings." After eating *Pulao* we reached the hotel. On entering the room I quoted a Punjabi proverb, meaning "an endless, tiresome travelling." Of course, Dada khan Nuri couldn't understand it, nor did I feel the need to explain it to him.

Mirza Ghalib Mohallah

Tashkent has a quarter which after the name of famous Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib is called as Mirza Ghalib Mohallah. The name of the road which goes to it is also Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib. Contiguous to it are two quarters----Al-Biruni Mohallah and Ibrahim Mohallah. Since Mirza Ghalib would take pride of his Uzbek roots, the Uzbek people named the mosque and the *mohallah* after him as a mark of commemoration of his memory. Mirza Ghalib became a legend in the domain of poetry but he could have achieved still more popularity if religion had been his passion. He himself proclaims:



"O Ghalib, your insight into and elucidation of esoteric subtleties is awe-inspiring. Had you not been an alcohlic, we would have taken you as a saint."

Two verses of Ghalib, including the above-mentioned one, havę always interested me and settled into my appreciative keenness. I quote them off and on in my conversation. The other one is fit for meditation and is liked by Naqshbandi dervishes:

جی ڈھونڈتا ہے پھر وہی فرصت کہ رات دن
بیٹھے رہیں تصور جاناں کئے ہوئے

"Again the heart seeks the same leisure so that we may keep sitting day and evening, contemplative of the Beloved."

Duty of Call

Mirza Ghalib Mohallah is situated near the Tashkent University in a vast, beautiful area. When Dada Khan Nuri talked to me about this *mohallah*, he also disclosed, "The headman of that *mohallah* has friendly ties with me. He is constructing there a mosque which is also named as Mirza Ghalib Mosque." Abbas Khan, who was sitting beside us and listening to this talk, rang up headman Obaidullah Jan. In response to the call he said, "The construction work of the mosque is over. Now we are going to start congregational Prayer in it. The *mohallah* people insist that some eminent personality should deliver the Friday sermon. Abbas Khan told him, "This is very good. Sitting beside us is a visiting divine from Pakistan who will do this job." As a result the Friday Prayer was programmed there and then. Dada Khan Nuri and Abbas Khan took me to Mirza Ghalib Mohallah on Friday. There stood a large, spacious and grand mosque, and lay in an outside corner a heap of left-over building material. Its construction was completed only a few days ago. We met Obaidullah Jan who was happy that the call for Prayer was

going to be made in their *mohallah*, that is, the Name of Allah would be resounded there for the first time. Indeed at my very sight he told me, "You will make the first Prayer call in our *mohallah* mosque. You will deliver the first Friday sermon as well as lead the first congregational Prayer and thereafter dine with us."

We performed our ablutions and entered the mosque. When I started making call for Prayer, men, women and children left their homes and hurriedly came towards the mosque. Men and children came into the mosque but women stood close to the doors and windows of the mosque. Some women raised hands for prayer, while others looked up to the sky and then put their hands on their chests. Obaidullah Jan told me these women were thrilled over hearing the first call for Prayer in their *mohallah*. I delivered the Friday sermon in Urdu and Dada Khan Nuri did its rendering enthusiastically. The listeners were just awe-inspired when I began the Khutbah after the second Prayer call. Some started weeping out of raptures. As soon as I came out of the mosque after the Friday prayer I found a crowd of women. I was told by the host that the women had gathered to seek my benedictions. I raised my hands and prayed for all of them. This enraptured the audience and tears started falling from their eyes. My eyes were tearful too, but for a different reason. I was thrilled to think that as long as people would do Prayers in this mosque, I would be rewarded for it as well. A Persian poet says:

ایں سعادت بزور بازو نیست
تا نہ بخشد خدائے بخشندہ

"This favour doesn't come from the exertion of one's own efforts, unless the gracious God shows His grace."

After the prayer the host took the guests to his residence. Outwardly this house was like other houses of the area with a high wall and a king-sized gate upon which grape-vines were hanging. It was quite simple but we had scarcely entered it when we saw a beautiful garden in front of us where stood apple, pear, almond and incense trees. On the three sides of the garden were verandas with wooden pillars and attached to them were large rooms. Obaidullah Jan led us into a hall-type room where valuable carpets and embroidered sheets were hanging against its walls. Its ceiling had fascinating portrayals and engravings, in which Uzbeks are so skilled that I haven't seen such embellishments anywhere in the world. A long dining-cloth was set in the midst of the guest-chamber with dried fruit laid on it. When we sat down on the dining-cloth, Obaidullah Jan made pieces of bread and put them on it. Instantly came big bowls full of soup. It was indeed stew. Each bowl had, apart from a big piece of meat, potatoes, vegetables and grains as well. We had hardly taken soup, that *pulao* was laid out on the dining-cloth. Uzbeks drink green tea with meal as we people drink cold water.

When the dinner was over I told Obaidullah Jan that I wanted to go. Thereupon be gave me a long, wool-filled coat as a gift, saying that was the Uzbek way of honouring guests. I prayed in my heart, "O Allah, when Your slaves are honouring me in this way, You too bestow upon me the dress of humanity. This is what You Yourself say in Your Book: و لباس التقوى ذلك خير(But the finest of all is the dress of piety).

A Journey to Angrin

When Maulana Abdullah Jan, according to his promise, came to the Tourism Hotel on May 16, he was accompanied by his friend Ummat Ali as well. Ummat Ali, the son of a Shaykh, had got engineering education. He had, as a mark of the observance of Sunnah, kept beard only a short time ago. Indeed it looked pretty on his pretty face. After formal introduction we kept talking for some time. I told him that I was scheduled to stay at Tashkent for another three days and then I would set out on a journey to Samarkand and Bukhara. Ummat Ali said if I put up with him, he would take me on an excursion to a nearby mountainous strip which drew holiday-makers from distant places. Maulana Obaidullah suggested that I should accept the offer. I okayed and the Angrin journey began. We covered the half distance by train and the rest of the journey was made by bus. In fact the bus travelling here is very comfortable. Incidentally an Uzbek girl was

sitting on a seat just in front of mine. As soon as the bus came into gear and she caught sight of me, she rose to her feet. She kept standing with a fixed gaze at my face. Maulana Abdullah told her that she had been standing for about half an hour and asked her to sit down as there still remained an hour's drive. She replied, "By looking at this guest's face. I am gaining the remembrance of Allah. I can keep standing for another one hour." When I heard this I prayed in my heart, "O Allah, people remember You by looking at my appearance. Kindly bring me back to life in the midst of these very people on the Day of Judgment." Angrin stands at a distance of 100 kilometers, from Tashkent and there are coal mines and huge power-generating factories in its neighbourhood. It seems as if each factory is a city in itself. This city is mostly inhabited by Russians. The city roads are wide and smooth like a runway. On every side there is an abundance of greenery and flowers. It is full of stately buildings. Had its people, apart from worldly benefits, been invested with virtuous conduct and the blessing of faith! Ummat Ali told me, "There are about ten mosques in the city. Yet it has only one chief mosque with its imam himself being a Shaykh of the Qadriah Order." After taking our meal we moved towards the mosque to put up our sunset Prayer. When we came out, we found the rain had stopped just a while ago. The drops of water were still falling from the leaves of trees and the stagnant water could be seen on all sides. It was hardly possible to get to the

mosque on foot. A car stopped beside us. A young man was sitting in the driver's seat, while a woman, holding an infant in her lap, was seated behind him.

He said to Ummat Ali, "Why are you standing here and who is this guest with you?" When Ummat Ali introduced me to him the woman said, "Is it possible that we should drop you near the mosque?" Taking it as a Divine help I nodded in agreement. The woman moved to the front seat, while three of us took the back seat. Thank God, we reached the mosque within no time. I told Ummat Ali to meet the Imam first. When we came to the door of his closet he motioned us to go inside the mosque. But we found no one in the mosque. Anyhow about fifteen men gathered up till the Prayer call was finished. Ummat Ali thought that we would introduce ourselves to the Imam after the Prayer was over. But when he led the Prayer he started talking with the worshippers and took them outside. Two or three men wanted to enquire of Ummat Ali about me but the Imam called them too. Reading signs of embarrassment over his face I asked Ummat Ali, "What is the matter?" He told me the Imam was not happy to see me and he didn't want me to be introduced to the worshippers, still less of delivering a speech in the mosque.

"Doesn't matter, the Naqshbandiah *Nisbat* will make its own way", I told him. Meanwhile Ummat Ali went out of the mosque and he saw the Imam gossip with the some men. At the sight of Ummat Ali he asked him, "Who is this stranger?"

He told him that I was a Naqshbandiah Shaykh. "But we are related to the Qadriah Order", the Imam said. When asked whether I could speak the Turkish language, Ummat Ali replied him in the negative. The Imam said, "Then how can we understand his talk? We don't want to waste our time." Ummat Ali said, "A guest is highly respected by Uzbeks. But today I feel shame that the guest is present in the mosque and the host is having a rap session outside." Two young men said, "All right, we go in for a while." They came in and sat beside me. I began to explain to them about the Naqshbandiah Order. After some time the outside people started trickling in one by one till fifteen gentlemen assembled in the mosque. The Imam kept waiting outside all alone. It was quite a while and nobody turned up. The Imam came in too to see what was happening. When he sat beside me I was, at that time, explaining what was meant by "hand in work" and "heart with Friend" (Solitude in the Crowd") and Maulana Abdullah was interpreting me. The Imam heard this and a change occurred in his heart.

On the conclusion of my discourse I asked the audience to sit in meditation. During the meditation he became the focus of such an attention *(tawajjuh)* that he began to writhe about, weeping uncontrollably. Being free from meditation the Imam said to me, "Please instruct me in the Path too." I told him, "*bay'ah* (initiatic pact with Shaykh) is a prerequisite to it." The Imam replied, "Though I assume

myself to be a practising Shaykh, my heart is reproaching me lest I should remain deprived of a blessing which is available to me at home. Kindly do me a favour by accepting me as your disciple." Subsequently the whole audience entered into the Naqshbandiah Order. After the evening Prayer I reconducted the meditative sitting.

When we wanted to leave after doing prayer the Imam took my staff and started walking in front of me like a mace-bearer. On reaching the mosque's gate he insisted that I accompany him to his home and take meal. Since Ummat Ali didn't expect this invitation he okayed it. Consequently we reached the residence of the Imam. His son was a Hafiz (had memorized the Qur'aan). He expressed the desire to enter into the Path. I brought the whole family under *bay'ah*. When we wanted to leave the Imam started kissing my staff, saying "I have been disrespectful to you today. Kindly forgive me and consider this mosque as yours." Then he directed his son to escort us home. On reaching home Ummat Ali apologised to me with folded hands for failure to give me the respect that I was worthy of. I told him, "You are not to be blamed for it. As for the Imam, he did show the cold shoulder in the beginning. The blessing of the sublime *Nisbat*, however, didn't let him remain unblessed." But Maulana Abdullah was overjoyed. He said to me, "O my leader, you have the genuine commodity. Wherever you go, you will find its seekers."

Thereafter Ummat Ali went into the women's apartments and related to them what had happened in the mosque. On hearing it Ummat Ali's wife sent in the message that the women should be brought under *bay'ah* too. I complied with her request. Ummat Ali's son Mohammad Uthman was very lovely. I told him, "From today onward I will call you Abu Uthman." Thank God, this name became so popular that the people of Central Asian Republics currently call him by the name of Abu Uthman.

Fascinating Scenery of Sa'ee Jablan

On May 17 Maulana Abdullah and Abu Uthman expressed the desire to make an excursion into the delightful, neighbouring hilly terrain. They hoped to return by the evening. I told them, "All right. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W), as goes a Tradition, would like lush-green places overflowing with water. We too would indulge in the remembrance of Allah there with the intention of observing Sunnah." Five people, including me, left Angrin for Sa'ee Jablan by car. After covering a distance of a few kilometers I felt that Maulana Abdullah and Abu Uthman were gesticulating to each other. On my enquiry I was told by Maulana Abdullah that Abu Uthman had got prepared sufficient meal but he forgot to bring it with him. He further said, "We shall have to go hungry throughout the day. We had better go back and bring the meal." I told him, "Maulana, Allah is responsible

for our daily bread. We shall take that meal when we return home, God willing."

He told me, "But what shall we do at the place we are heading to?" In response to his query I read out the following Persian couplet:

کار سازِ ما بفکرِ کارِ ما

فکرِ ما در کارِ ما آزارِ ما

"Our Maker takes care of our affairs. Our caring about our affairs indeed causes headache to us."

The Maulana was immensely pleased to hear this couplet but remarked that going hungry would be quite a job. I told him, "Maulana, I am from amongst that class of fakirs who are given manna and quails, the miraculous food of Exodus. Allah has all along shown me the rare signs of His Beneficence and He will provide food now too." This silenced the Maulana, no doubt. Yet his facial expression betrayed embarrassment. We reached the charming top of a mountain at 11 a.m. where stood tall trees all around. There was such an abundance of flowers and fruits as if some human hand might have hung them on the trees. The view was so alluring as could be a marvellous natural scenery drawn on a paper. The flowing waterfalls and the lush greenery had added a special charm to the beauty of the surroundings. The fragrant atmosphere was exhilarating to

head and heart. Maulana Abdullah looked at me and said, "Hazrat, what a beautiful place it is!" In response I read out some verses:

چاند تاروں میں تو مرغزاروں میں تو اے خدایا!
کس نے تیری حقیقت کو پایا
تو نہاں تیرا جلوہ عیاں ہے تیری ہستی کا مظہر جہاں ہے
پھول میں مثل بو چھپ کے بیٹھا ہے تو اے خدایا!
بحر عصیاں سے مولا بچا لے دل کی کشتی تیرے حوالے
تو ہی غفار ہے تو ہی ستار ہے اے خدایا
کس نے تیری حقیقت کو پایا

"O God, You are reflected in the moon, the stars and the meadows. Who has discovered Your reality? You are hidden but Your glory is unhidden. The world is the manifestation of Your existence. O God, You are embedded in the flower, symbolizing its fragrance. O God, I handover the boat of my heart to You, steer it safely out of the sea of sins. O God, You alone are the Forgiver, You alone are the Veiler (of sins). Who has discovered Your reality?"

All the companions listen to the verses with ecstatic delight. The Maulana told me, "Hazrat, tents are available here to take rest for a short while and we can hire one of

them. I okayed. When we stepped forward we found there a restaurant, an official rest-house, smooth, spacious playgrounds and also pitched tents for the rest and comfort of tourists. When I peeped into some tents I smelt the rank whiffs of wine. Each tent had two set beds. The Maulana told me, "Hazrat, tourists come here for carnal pleasures. The restaurant existing below supplies girls to them to spend night. To tell you the truth, one can hardly find here a clean or unused tent." I replied, "No, never. Our Lord must make a way for us." Meanwhile, a man approached us and asked if we wanted a tent. I said, "Yes, but it must be clean and pure." He told us that the craftsman had manufactured a tent only minutes ago and we could get that. When we reached the spot and examined the tent, it was brand-new with neat and clean beds. We immediately paid its rent and thanked God Who had granted our desire. We were sitting there and talking about the quiet remembrance of Allah that a man came there with a tray of roasted meat and said his wife had sent that. I asked him, "What do you mean?" He replied, "I live in a house situated above. My wife had roasted mutton. By chance she caught sight of you people and told me to take the dish to the guests. I have simply brought a message in the form of roasted mutton. Kindly accept our hospitality." He said this and went away. I looked at the faces of Maulana Abdullah and Abu Uthman who had become the embodiment of astonishment. I told them, "Now you can believe that I am

one of those who are given *manna* and quails." The Maulana said, "O my Shaykh, you are true. Glory be to Allah Who bestows upon dervishes like us a variety of blessings." The occasion reminded me of the Qur'aanic verse: فبأي آلاء ربكما تكذبان "Which then of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?" (55:13).

Soon after some other people came to see me as well. The locals told me that this area had been inhabited by eminent ulema and pious people in the past. One of its luminaries was Mulla Rafiuddin who had taught for forty years in Bukhara's madresahs. When the 1917 Revolution took place the ulema belonging to this area were either arrested or forced to emigrate from here. Their descendants are still found in a nearby locality. Following liberation from the Russian yoke they immediately took to the practice of the shariah. During this conversation a man came with two bowls full of soup and the delicious local curd. Since we were sharply hungry we had our fill of it. I told Maulana Abdullah and Abu Uthman, "You are the guests of Allah, so eat your fill. And sing praises of the One Who provides you food." We offered Prayer after taking meal and then had a siesta. Thereafter we came out to take a stroll. Maulana Abdullah took me to the waterfall, the sight of which I enjoyed like anything. The spring water, the vibrating fall of water and the winding wooden ladders along the water all presented a view of its own. The water of the cataract passing through the

both sides of a huge rock which I was able to see only when I climbed down some steps of the ladder. We moved along and sat on the rock. The sound of the water had a seduction and melody of its own. I began there *Tehlil-i-Lisani* (the Affirmation of God and the denial of the non-God with tongue --- "There is no deity but Allah") with Maulana Abdullah and Abu Uthman following suit. We felt as if we were transported in the seventh heaven. That experience has indeed become a living memory. After sitting there for an hour we came up and moved towards the playgrounds. I spread my scarf on a grassy place and sat there along with my companions. I touched upon an exhortative talk which continued for some time. Some locals too kept participating in this sitting.

Dose of Sobriety

Someone informed me that about fifteen young men were drinking liquor in the restaurant, saying that they had made all hot arrangements for debauchery and were about to get into the tents driven by base motives. I told the informer to go and bring all of them to me. Miraculously, when my message was given to them, they were so overawed that they tamely came with him to me. Although they had taken wine yet still it had not gone to their head. I was under such a flush of Divine love that my heart induced me to act on them in Order to tear them away from erotic love and integrate into

Allah. I recited some Qur'aanic verses which immediately sank into their hearts. When I instructed them to give up a sinful life and take to the virtuous path they unanimously uttered amen to it. Maulana Abdullah told me it was surprising that all of them were intent on a heart-felt repentance. I made all the fifteen drunkards utter the *bay'ah*-related words and instructed them in the method of Allah's remembrance and meditation. I also pinpointed their *latifah qalb* (Heart's subtle point) and advised them to go home straightaway. They instantly started their cars and went away. Maulana Abdullah said to me, "Hazrat, it was surely the work of your charismatic power that so many people unanimously swore off drinking. Despite the fact that the seductive, spicy girls had been hired out by them, they abstrained from having sex with them and drove home. I spontaneously quoted the Poet of the East:

نشہ پلا کے گرانا تو سب کو آتا ہے
مزہ تو جب ہے کہ گرتوں کو تھام لے ساقی

"O cupbearer, it is an effortless job to get anybody intoxicated and then let him tumble down. But it will be your real feat if you prop up tumblers.

Fallen Rocks

When the news of the drunkards' repentance reached the superintendent of the government rest-house, he came to see me with the request that I should accept his feast. In the beginning I felt disinclined to agree. Yet he told me, "Hazrat, I have spent my whole life at this place and seen people sinning round the clock. It was a surprise why had Divine wrath not befallen it? Thank God, you have come here today and conducted a sitting of Allah's remembrance and meditation. Furthermore, fifteen young men have sworn off drinking and committing adultery. This is enough for us to believe you. We will lie down on your way. You are free either to walk over our bodies or to please our hearts by accepting our invitation." I told him, "You seem to be well aware of the art of putting across your case." He replied, "Yes, as you know the knack of capturing hearts." This made the audience burst into laughter.

When we reached the rest-house we found that the table had been set with such pomp and splendour as was displayed in the honour of a visiting Head of State. The splendid array of dishes included roasted meat, boiled meat, soup pulao, fruit, dried fruit and what not. During eating meal Maulana Abdullah and Abu Uthman repeatedly uttered "Glory be to Allah!" I told them, "If you had brought the home-cooked meal, you would not have had more than that. When you put trust in God, a variety of dishes came to your lot." When the

dinner was over we were set to travel back. The local people gave me their postal addresses and noted down my address, saying that if and when I ever visited Central Asia again, their place must be placed on my itinerary. After about one-third journey was covered, we found traffic jam on the road. Maulana Abdullah alighted from the vehicle and came to know that a large part of a roadside mountain had tumbled down the road. The road had been carved out of the mountain. On its one side flowed a river seventy foot below and on its other side stood rocky hills. He was perplexed to see the huge mass of the fallen rocks and told us that the road was totally blocked with no signs of its reopening. On hearing it we also came out of the vehicle. Rocks like large sand dunes stood on the whole width and sufficient length of the road hardly leaving any passage even for pedestrians. This state of perplexity took about fifteen minutes. Meanwhile we came across a cop. I asked him when the blockage would be cleared. He replied, "We have sent for cranes and bulldozers. But I presume that it will take us a week to clear the way."

This made Maulana Abdullah much perturbed and he told me, "The car driver has to reach home at any cost. He can't afford to get stuck here for a week." I wanted to know if there was any alternative route going to Angrin. The driver said, "Yes, if we go behind, there is another route. But instead of 100 it is 250-kilometer long." I told my companions, "Let

the driver go with the luggage by that route. And we consign ourselves to Allah. He will definitely make some way for us."

Feast on River's Bank

Maulana Abdullah kept thinking for some time and then at last told the driver, "Do what the Shaykh tells you. That must have some good." When the driver drove off we got engrossed in eyeing the scene that the Almighty had raised up before our eyes. The rocks were lying on the road like the pieces of glass. A 50-meter-long strip was littered with the rocks. I told Maulana Abdullah, "Let's move forward by walking over the rocks." He asked me, "How can we do that?" I told him, "Rocks don't block the way of those who are bold, courageous and determined. They traverse across the rocky way." Having said this I started mounting the rocks with both Maulana Abdullah and Abu Uthman following me. Maulana Abdullah was constantly eying the mountain of his right side as if he feared lest any rock should tumble down on us. However, when we advanced by passing through the rocks we found that traffic was blocked there too. People were standing there with a look of puzzlement over their faces. Scarcely had we jumped down from the last rock on the road when a man came running to me. He said, "Shaykh, where are you to go?" I replied that Angrin was the point of our destination. He said, "We have space in our vehicle. We had left home with the aim of picnicking. Yet the

road blockage held us up. On seeing you our women have suggested that if you agree, we go down and eat meal on the bank of the river. Later we shall drop you." I okayed. The young man bounced out of happiness as if he had achieved his object. The women happily took out their cooking utensils and the children started bouncing around. Also I and my companions, getting down seventy feet below, reached the bank of the river. The women collected dry sticks to set on fire and heat up the cooked meal. The men laid the table-cloth and we sat down for Allah's remembrance under the shelter of a huge rock. The river's flow and birds' sweet singing had created quite delightful atmosphere. After saying our sunset Prayer we took meal. I had never eaten such a delicious food before. Perhaps the sweetness of our hosts' hearts had gone into it. When the dinner was over the women requested me to instruct them in things religious. I complied with their request. Thank God, after a short discourse our hosts, both men and women, gave me their word to abide by the rules of the Shariah.

On return the women, along with the children, boarded one vehicle and we the men took a separate one. It took us one hour to reach the house of the host. His father, who was one of the eminent ulema of the area, embraced me warmly by keeping the clasp for some minutes. Later he entertained me with tea and offered me a costly cope as a gift. On reaching home we thanked Allah Who had made the journey

comfortable to us. Indeed prior to departure I had prayed: اللهم هون علينا سفرنا هذا "O Allah, make this journey convenient to us."

It was mid night and we were dead tired. I had hardly slipped into the soft, warm bed when I fell asleep. On getting up we offered our dawn Prayer. When I opened the window the snow-capped mountain tops rose in my view and this reminded me of Sa'ee Jablan.

Samarkand City

This city stands on the Silk Highway. Yet it paled into insignificance with the discovery of new sea routes. History tells us that within the span of four centuries only two European tourists were able to reach Samarkand till 1850.

On its one side flows the Zarfashan river and on its three sides the range of *Ti'een Shi'een* mountains girdles round Samarkand. To reach this city by passing through the mountain pass has its own charm. Samarkand, it is said, is even more than 2500 years old. What accounted for its one-time title as the Rome of the East was its culture, civilization and advancement.

Originally it was called Marakand. Alexander the Great conquered it in 322 B.C. and in 712 AD it was taken by Arab conquerors. But 1221 was the ominous year when Chinghis Khan razed it to the ground.

In 1414 its star was again in the ascendant when Amir Timur made it the capital of his empire. By raising magnificent and imposing buildings on its soil he brought Samarkand on the front burner of the day. Centuries have passed yet its relics still speak of its past beauty and glory.

On 19th May 1992 I left for Samarkand along with Maulana Abdullah and Dada Khan Nuri. We had meal on our way and reached the chief mosque of *Dhul-Morad* at the time of the noon Prayer. After the Prayer I had a meeting with its imam, Mufti Ghulam Mustafa Gul. Maulana Abdullah introduced me to the Mufti and also related to him things as had gone before his eyes at Naminghan and Indjan. This inflamed in his heart feelings of love and devotion for me. "How long will you stay here?", The Mufti questioned me. "About three or four days" was my reply. He said, "All right, you are my guests. There will be daily meetings with you. I told him, "Please tell us something about the sweep of the Red Revolution and also the details of the bad times that came in its wake for the Muslims." He replied me while sipping a cup of tea that all that could not be done at a single sitting. Yet I requested him to make a beginning, saying it would be completed if God willed so.

Background of Red Revolution

Agreeing to relate the details of the Red Revolution the Mufti said: "Samarkand and Bukhara had been the seats of

learning for centuries. A religious aura prevailed here with the ulema's image being high in the public eyes. The Russian Jews wanted to destroy these Islamic centers and they hatched a deep conspiracy to that nefarious end. A few Jewish families shifted to Bukhara under the pretext of business. They flourished in their trade by dint of hard work. They put their children at the chief madresah of Bukhara. Since they were intelligent and their selection had been promoted for a specific mission, they shined in their learning and left behind their class-fellows. The teachers too praised their intelligence. They would secure top positions in examinations, surpassing others. These boys acquired religious knowledge at madresah but on returning home they were completely brainwashed by their parents. There Jewish roots were identified with the disclosure that they were being grounded in Islamic disciplines with a specific aim.

The Jewish boys kept acquiring the knowledge of the Faith but with its light being denied to them as skepticism had been instilled into their minds. When after years their education was competed they were appointed teachers at the same madresah for their brilliance. They not only got popular with their students but also succeeded in winning the hearts of people. With the passage of time this deep conspiracy kept gaining ground till a moment came when they were made Muftis of Bukhara. Here everybody sought to put utterances of the Mufti into action. They did their job so well for some

time that the masses took them to their heart. Thereafter they started pronouncing such judgements that generated the heat of hairsplitting in theological circles. In the beginning the ulema avoided taking a serious notice of the situation but when it became unbearable they took to a crusading position against it. The ulema who had been a united force for centuries were divided into two opposite camps. A climate of bitter controversies prevailed all around all the time. The masses felt disgusted with this state of affairs till the ulema's image was eroded away from their heart. They adopted a lifestyle which was uncoloured by the religious leadership and this cost society the blessings which it had enjoyed all along on account of unity and the sense of togetherness. That was the first phase of conspiracy.

It was in such circumstance that the Czar of Russia triggered off his thrust of expansionism into Muslim lands. That was the second phase of the conspiracy. Friendship with Muslim countries was the approach which was adopted to this end. Good relations were maintained with them for a few years and later came the specious suggestion from the Kremlin that they would be put on the scientific track. Introduction of railways and industrialization, it was argued, would oe the course of action which would bring economic uplift and inflow of wealth in its wake. This offer caught the fancy of the Muslim rulers. The ulema opposed it but nobody heeded them. Since the religious leaders had already been

discredited, theirs was the voice in the wilderness. When the Czar sifted all facts of the internal Muslim situation he entered upon the pursuit of a policy of duplicity. He impressed upon each and every Central Asian State that it was uniquely endowed with untapped deposits of gold, minerals and oil. If she, came the disclosure, distanced herself away from the rest of the regional States, an unshared abundance of wealth would be her lot. He further argued that if her natural resources were disclosed to others they would be tempted to seek for their share too.

This conspiracy worked and the Muslim countries themselves began to feel alienated from each other. The gulf of differences went on widening and it was not too late when they turned their backs on each other. Having cleared the decks the Czar was quick to wilfully pick up a quarrel with the weakest one. Yet he hypocritically convinced the other countries of his abiding friendship, saying that his target was the evil one alone. By the pursuit of this cloak-and-dagger policy --- elusive to the rulers' grasp --- he kept usurping the Muslim lands one by one. The time came when the whole Muslim region was under his thumb.

After describing these events the Mufti brought out a photo presenting the full lay-out of the students and ulema of the Bukhara madresah. Right from the small student to the madresah administrator, everybody without exception looked wearing turban and Sunnah dress. I asked him, "What is

this?" The Mufti replied that when the Communists seized Bukhara they commanded all the ulema and the students to stand at a place and this photograph was taken for the record.

Ulema's Persecution

The Mufti continued narrating the post-Revolution events and said, "The third phase was this that the ulema became the first target of the Communists after the Revolution. Everywhere they were hunted up, murdered and sent to the gallows. The pogrom of ulema was on such scale that their bodies were dumped at a place and then earth heaped over them through cranes. Even today those mass-graves exist at many places. Some ulema were carried in a ship and loaded down in the frozen Siberian sea. Some of them were chilled to death. Later some who survived this terrible ordeal narrated their episode. In Order to protect themselves from cold they always remained in motion. When hunger became unbearable they would break up the ice-sheet, put their hand into the water, catch some fish and eat it up alive. Day and night they could not sleep. If on occasion they had a catnap with a momentary relief, their body began to get benumbed due to severe cold. They had no other way than to keep their body in motion. Following their instinct they would keep walking in some direction. That was how their days and evenings went on passing. It was the Will of Allah that eventually they succeeded in coming out of the icy

Siberia. It was also a Communist practice that the ulema were thrust into two trains which moved from opposite directions. Then according to the prearranged scheme the speedy trains rammed into each other at a deserted place. Resultantly some were killed and some were maimed for life. Also they were falsely charged with indulging in terrorist activity and subjected to excessive tortures. To be brief, no attempt was spared by the Communists to wipe out the ulema.

A divine is still alive in the vicinity of Samarkand; the listener's hair stands on end when he tells the tale of Russian atrocities. The Russians would ask him to wash his hands and rinse his mouth in a wash-bowl. Then after spilling the unclean water in his presence he was given food to eat in the same bowl. The motive was to make him feel nauseous and shun eating the food as well. So small a place was given to him to sleep that neither he could lie down nor stretch his legs. Cold water was poured over his body in days of severe cold. It also happened that he was compelled to sit in cold water for the whole night so as to keep him sleepless. Such was the extent of their cruelty that the ulema ---- who all shared the same fate preferred going to the gallows instead. At this the cruel functionaries were amused and they intimated all this to Moscow. One is all praise for these ulema who put up with all these repressive measures but declined to accept unbelief. Some interesting things also came to my knowledge. There lies a cave in the neighbourhood of

Samarkand. In it a man was found martyred in a sitting position when he was offering his Prayer. A bullet had hit his chest and passed out through his back. He died in this very condition. Some hairs of his beard had dropped but his body was found intact after a long period. The bodies of some chaste women were found in a mountainous cave and a man was murdered in a condition while he was standing guard over its mouth. Even today if someone tries to climb the mountain in order to reach the cave, some pebbles would strike him as if one had taken aim at him. The higher you climb, the faster would the pebbles gain velocity. This is the reason now nobody makes an attempt to climb this mountain.

To come to the point, thousands of ulema were martyred for this reason alone that they believed in God. How beautifully a Persian poet has said!

بنا کردند خوش رسمے بخاک و خون غلطیدن

خدا رحمت کند ایں عاشقان پاک طینت را

"Wallowing in blood and dust is an auspicious rite which they have brought into vogue. May Allah shower His (countless) blessings upon these sublime-natured Lovers!"

Anti-Religion Drive

After wiping out the ulema, as assumed by the Red Revolutionaries, the fourth stage was this that Islam should be driven away from the lives of people. For this purpose they not only banned the Qur'aan and its teaching but framed a law that if any passage or the page of a book written in the Arabic-Urdu script was found from a house, all of its inmates would be sent to gallows. The fear of life deprived people of religious instruction. The letters of Uzbek and Tajik languages resembled the Arabic ones. The Communists changed them too and instead institutionalized the medium of the Russian language so as to alienate the future generations from the religious teaching.

Women were forbidden to cover their heads. If a school or college girl wore a scarf over her hair, policemen publicly stopped her and removed it from her head. And if she had long hair, they cut it off with the scissors. People were told that religion was an intoxicant like opium. They were indoctrinated that "It is not God Who has created man, rather he has created the concept of God." It was further impressed on their minds that man has some physical requirements and he should feel no shame to meet them. If he, for example, feels hungry, he shouldn't feel ashamed of eating something. If he feels thirsty, to drink water should not be a matter of shame for him. If he feels sleep, he should not feel shame to

go to sleep. And if he feels sexual hunger, why should he feel ashamed of having intercourse with a reachable girl?

Music was popularized in this way that every home was essentially required to get installed in it a receiver of the radio and keep it on all the time. Even such equipment were fitted on to the arch of a few mosques which had been retained for showcase purposes. Through this apparatus either the gospel of atheism was preached or music played most of time. Even against one's liking one was supposed to listen to the music. Consequently people went on getting attuned to sensual pleasures.

Wine was made so common and cheap a thing that it was available at a price of 2 roubles per bottle, whereas 7UP cost 4 roubles. For economic reasons the common people would prefer wine to 7UP. Wine was made a commonly available commodity out of this consideration that modesty should have no place in society, wiping off all vestiges of religion from the minds of people.

Though forbidden for Muslims, pork was made a common food so as to spawn moral depravity among the eaters. The roast pork was so cheap that people became habitual of eating its kababs. The common man who could not afford to purchase some cooked food he ate Kababs with bread. But from moral point of view violation of the Shariah taboo imperceptibly affected his heart and mind.

Atrocious Plan

When the Communists snuffed out religion at the external plane they apprehended that people might be practising it surreptitiously. Keeping this in view, thirty years after the Revolution, they proclaimed that they would be lenient to worshippers and everybody could worship as he desired. The Muslims were very happy over it. Gradually they started saying Prayer at home. Intelligence agencies kept formulating a report and it took three years to prepare the lists. Then one day they suddenly arrested all those people who cherished religion and put them to death. The Communists were immensely pleased with the operation that now they had totally rooted out religion.

In order to ensure people's acceptance of the Communist system of life under duress their link with the outside world was totally cut off by Moscow. In the first place one could hardly get a passport for foreign travel and if anybody had it somehow, he became the pursuit of intelligence. Everybody remained in the grip of fear. Wife and husband did spying on each other and even brother and sister could not trust each other. This is how family members living in the same house were virtually cut off from one another. After listening to this painful tale I asked the Mufti then how religion survived the process of a seven-decade erosive persecution.

Survival Story

After heaving a deep sigh the Mufti began to recall events from memory: "The Communists ruled over people's bodies but not their hearts. The believers with illumined hearts kept their faith concealed and attained to the rank as the Qur'aan testifies قلبه مطمئن بالايمان (while his heart remains true to his faith) (16:106). The Russians did their best to trace out such believers. Some of them were arrested and some remained untraced. My father, for instance, was an eminent divine but at the heels of the Revolution he cut such a poor figure of himself as if he was a stupid illiterate. He would plough the State-owned land with the tractor all the day long and work for about 18 hours a day. He was generally taken as an unlettered peasant who had made a fetish of tractor driving. Whereas after finishing his ploughing work at about midnight he would return home and immediately start instructing me in Hadith.

I was a small boy. My father would tell my mother to make tea and make me sit by the meal-cloth. Meanwhile, he secretly offered his Prayer in the room. Occasionally policemen came outside our home, offered me sweets and said, "Does your father say Prayer inside?" I replied in the negative because I had left him at tea. Sometimes they asked a child if he had learnt any Arabic sentence from his father. On an affirmative reply his father could be put to death. If any child knew بسم الله "In the Name of Allah" in Arabic, jail

awaited his father. A schoolteacher was supposed to report to the KGB if any of his pupils knew some Arabic words.

Such was the underground working of the ulema that none could have an inkling of it. Religious education continued in top-most secrecy at different places.

Sometimes we built a soundproof hall where things of requirement were stored up and around it were constructed other rooms. One door of a room opened into the hall. When the teacher, along with his pupils, entered the hall we fastened the door with wood and nails. In order to escape detection we stood almirahs against it and put bottles of wine and nude photographs in the room. When policemen, during routine checking, noticed the anti-religious scenario in the room they were satisfied with our atheistic facade and left. They never knew that just behind them innocent children were reciting the Book of Allah. Sometimes we brought out the teacher and his pupils after a period of six months. At the time of entry to the hall the children could hardly read the Qur'aan but on their exit they had good understanding of it. Inspiring was the sacrifice of a mother who in spite of remaining in the courtyard of the house could not see the face of her child for months. If our people were wiseacres they would have been divested of faith. But they were God-oriented crazy souls. So He kept their faith unimpaired."

An Urdu poet says:

لوٹ آئے جتنے بھی فرزانے گئے
تا بہ منزل صرف دیوانے گئے

"All the wiseacres who had set out in the pursuit of the goal came back from the way. It was only the crazy souls who reached it.

So enjoyable and inspiring was the long tale of the Mufti that I wished him to go on divulging more things but the non-stop talk had tired him. "Please let me postpone the narration of further details to next meeting", he said.

Perseverance of the Fair Sex

Next day I performed my Zuhr (noon) Prayer in the mosque where some young men had come to see me. They were insistent on taking me to their home. First I regretted my inability to accompany them but when they entreated me too much I took up the matter with the Mufti. He said to me, "Please don't refuse these young men because their mother has made a lot of sacrifices. She is ill and wants to see you. I would go with you." When we were seated in the vehicle the Mufti told me that at the advent of the Red Revolution their mother was a twenty-year-old youth. She would fearlessly exhort other girls to keep murmuring *Kalimah* (two Testifications of Faith) and call them to the practice of Islam. When warned of the danger to her life she would reply that the hour of death is fixed and inevitable and "I will not desist

from preaching the Religion." The Mufti told me, "She continued this practice for seventy years. Now she is 90 and confined to bed for illness. Since she heard about the arrival of a Shaykh from Pakistan she has been eager to see you." When we entered their house we found its courtyard quite spacious. My eyes fell upon an old woman who, reclining against a cushion, was sitting on a bedstead. I stood three or four meters away from the bedstead. I made a salaam to her with the request that she should pray for me. She raised her hands and prayed, "O God, keep our faith intact." Tears welled up in my eyes.

Glory be to Allah! A woman who had been devotedly urging others to keep invoking *Kalimah* (Declaration of Faith) since her teenage was praying to God even at 90 to keep her faith intact. That was enough to show how much faith mattered in her heart. Please let me quote here two Urdu verses:

شکستہ دل سے جو آہ نکلے تو فرش کیا عرش کانپ اٹھے گا
در قفس جو کہ وا نہ ہوگا تو ایک دن ٹوٹ کر رہے گا
کسی کے روکے سے حق کا پیغام کب رکا ہے جواب رکے گا
چراغ ایماں تو آندھیوں میں جلا کیا ہے جلا رہے گا

"They cry of a broken heart would make even the empyrean shudder still less the earth. If the prison gate is not unlocked it is sure to break down one

day. Never has the message of Truth been clogged up by anybody, nor will it clog up in future. The lamp of faith has been burning in the winds and it will burn in future as well.

Madresahs of the Raighastan

An historical place, known as the Raighastan Chowk, (Desert Crossing) lies exactly in the heart of Samarkand. There are three awesomely grand, huge and fascinating madresah buildings. This central crossing was the biggest bazaar of Central Asia and the rendezvous of trading caravans during the Timur period. The shops of craftsmen and skilled workers stood around it. In the fifteenth century, Mirza Ulugh Beg, son of Amir Timur, established here the first madresah where he himself worked as a teacher and enjoyed the reputation of being an eminent mathematician, philosopher and astronomer. A century later Balang Dosh Bahadar, the ruler of Samarkand, got built another madresah of this type on its opposite side. In view of the snowballing of students it was certainly a good step. Images of lions chasing dear are carved on the gate of the madresah which has high engraved doors, pillars and arches. For it the name of "Shair-der-Madresah" (Lion in Madresah) was given to it. We cannot find any plausible explanation for such engravings on the gate of a religious institution.

On the third side of the Raighastan Chowk stands the 17th century "Talakari Madresah" (Gilded Madresah). There

is a beautiful blue-domed masjid (mosque) in the middle of madresah with its arch having been gilded by 200 kilograms of gold. For this reason it came to be called as the "Talakari (gilded) Madresah." Such was the construction of this mosque's minarets that they separately looked to be leaning and for centuries had stood in this position. In 1932 they were straightened. Russian and Uzbek experts are proud of this achievement.

The Grand Mufti of Samarkand, Ghulam Mustafa Gul, took us on the visit of these madresahs on the very sight of which I was sunk into a reverie of good old days when pious souls and savants like Darmi and author of Hidayah would delivers lectures to their pupils in these madresahs. The desserted look of these places was distressing to us. The Russian government had used them as night clubs. What an irony of fate, music tunes and singing would stimulate people into dancing in the places where the sacred texts of Qur'aan and Hadith and juristic principles were explained to knowledge-seekers!

Currently the space between these three madresahs is being used for celebrating particular events, both at public and government levels. A museum has been housed in Talakari Madresah by the government. Leaving aside the Prayer niche and pulpit of the masjid the rest of the space has been used for the display of the works of art. Yet I was much pleased to see the beauty of these two points. In order to

receive the Divine blessing I sat on the pulpit and gave a brief moral talk to the interest of the audience.

The custodian of Masjid Dhul-Murad, Faizullah and Maulana Abdullah said to me, "Hazrat (sir), nobody would have delivered such a sermon during the last five decades." Thereafter we spread a sheet of cloth on the floor, offered two non-obligatory cycles of Prayer on it and earnestly prayed to Allah for the rehabilitation of the madresahs. The impressive height and hugeness of there monuments gave us an inkling of the moral height of those who had got them built.

On return we stayed overnight at Masjid Dhul-murad. The Grand Mufti of Samarkand said to me, "Hazrat, I kept speaking last evening. It is your turn today. Let you please say a few words of advice to me. I thought wherever a cobbler would go, mending shoes would be his job. So let me throw light on my Sufi Order here. I kept talking about the Naqshbandiah Order and also employed the weapon of my spiritual concentration upon hearts. As a result the Grand Mufti said in the end, "Hazrat, kindly initiate me into your discipleship as well. Such an intense love has developed in my heart for you that I can't simply put it into words." I initiated him into the Sufi Order and pinpointed to him the location of Heart's subtle point. I myself was happy over his initiation and in fact owing to his qualities of head and heart I had kept him in my focus all along.

Thereafter the Mufti made his family members and children enter discipleship too. He said to me, "I am opposed to world-oriented ulema and Shariah-disoriented Sufis. I saw your demeanour till my heart testified that I would be able to take influence from you spiritually."

Maulana Abdullah was particularly happy over the Mufti's initiation into spiritual brotherhood and disclosed to me, "Imams of 150 principal mosques in the Samarkand province come under the supervision of the Mufti. He leads an audience of 5,000 people in Friday Prayer. Under his leadership about one lakh people perform Eid Prayer in front of the Raighastan Madresah. His tongue has an uncanny appeal to hearts. He sweeps away false beliefs by the force of his invincible arguments. His elder son is studying at a Tashkent madresah and daughters are memorising the Holy Qur'aan at home. His wife is conversant with Arabic grammar and he has religious atmosphere at home." I said to Maulana Abdullah, "You have talked about a lot of the Mufti's virtues." He replied, "My good sir, he has an edge over ten thousand men."

The Mufti showed me the visitor's book of his madresah in which the visiting ulema from Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia etc. had written down their impressions. The Mufti said to me, "Hazrat, all the visitors have penned their impression in the book, yet you have inscribed Allah in the book of my Heart." I told him, "My dear Mufti, none can give

guidance without the Will of Allah we repose trust in Him and to Him we seek recourse."

Ulema and students got wind of the Grand Mufti's initiatory oath within no time. When he left for home the custodian and the muezzin of the masjid and some other persons followed suit. Samarkand's madresah students arrived in droves and took the initiatory oath at my hands. The sitting which had started after the evening Prayer continued till the morning Prayer at a stretch. I repeatedly administered the initiatory oath to the newcomers.

There came a young scholar who put some subtle questions to me prior to his being initiated into the Order. His intelligence and decent talk caught Maulana Abdullah's fancy. After an hour-long dialogue he accepted discipleship too. This impressed the muezzin and he eagerly told me that the recruitment of this young scholar as a disciple would stimulate almost every young man of the Samarkand city to follow suit. I noticed one thing to my surprise that the faces of some students glowed with an uncanny light which seemed to be the result of a sincere practice of religious tenets and dedication to God.

After the morning Prayer the Khatib (sermoniser) of Ishaq Wali Masjid, Maulana Nasrullah, and a religious teacher, Maulana Ahmed Khan, also took the initiatory oath. At 9 a.m. Maulana Abdullah said to me, "O my chief, please

take rest for some time because your body needs it too." I accepted the suggestion and dispersed the audience.

Rare Manuscripts

After being inducted in Naqshbandiah Order Maulana Ahmed Khan told me that he worked in a library which had a good collection of rare manuscripts and books. I asked him whether I could see those books. He replied that the matter was really difficult because if he would try to seek permission in that regard he might lose his job under the official misconception that he had foreign tentacles. I told him, "Well, you please simply give me the address. Accompanied by somebody I shall myself reach there and see those rare things too, God willing. And in case I was refused permission, I would submit to the will of Allah." The Maulana accepted it.

Next day I took Faizullah and Maulana Abdullah with me and reached the library gate. As soon as the security man saw us he instantly let us to enter the gate. When we got in the library hall a lady librarian approached me and said, "What brings you here?" When I told her that I wanted to see the library she said, "You can see the library as you please. To unfold its historical background, she said that on the advent of the Russian Revolution the Communists began to set fire to the religious books which were found in Muslim homes. Countless books were reduced to ashes. Yet the

Muslim adopted novel ways to preserve these books. Some buried the books. Some made grave-like mounds over the buried books for the purpose of preserving their identity. Whereas others buried such books and erected walls for their preservation. Seven decades have passed since this happened. Those who buried these books are no more in the world. Now some of their descendants keep the memory and some have forgotten all that. After emancipation from the Kremlin the government announced that anyone who would bring a rare book for the library would be fairly compensated. Consequently people aided by their individual memories are bringing out the books. Whenever a worthwhile book is available, we buy and preserve it. Presently we have a collection of 3000 rare books in the library."

Thereafter she sent for Maulana Ahmed Khan from a room and told him that I was a foreign guest and the library books should be shown to me. Having said this she went back to her seat. Maulana Ahmed Khan looked at me with a smile. I said to him, "Maulana, have you seen the blessings of *Nisbat* that what was almost impossible in your view has been made so easy by Allah?" Again he gave me a smile and provided useful information about the books. The first book, most authentic in the realm of medicine, which I saw there was *al-Qanoon* and the next one was *Tafseer* (exegesis) *Hussaini,* widely known for its depths and subtleties of knowledge.

Qur'aan on Steel Sheets

Maulana Ahmed Khan led us into a room where a pile of steel sheets covered by a cloth was lying. He removed the cloth and we saw that the Holy Qur'aan was carved in the steel sheets. He told us that the steel sheets contained a full set of the Book of Allah. I asked Maulana Ahmed Khan what could be the motive behind such an arduous exercise of carving the Qur'aan in the steel sheets. He replied that the Muslim rulers had perhaps thought that there should be a standard copy of the Book to serve as a criterion like the Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) according to which time was calculated throughout the world.

Since the Qur'aan inscribed on these steel sheet, would survive for a very long period of time, it is an authentic copy. If ever anybody would try to tamper with the Qur'aan, the wilful error would be corrected by comparing it with this metallic manuscript. The rust-free steel sheet was so heavy that four men were required could carry it.

Qur'aan Inscribed on Leaves

While we were busy talking lady Library Director came upon us. She bowed down to me and asked whether I had seen all the books, I replied in the affirmative. She told me, "I keep a special thing with me. Please come, I will show it to you." She took us in her room and opened a big box in which lay another box. When she opened it a briefcase emerged to

our view. We found mini-sized manuscripts of the Holy Qur'aan when the Director opened the briefcase. They had been preserved through the application of chemicals. So minute and thread-like was the lettering that we could not possibly read the manuscripts. But when she brought us a magnifying glass we saw through it, to our pleasant surprise, neatly and beautifully written Qur'aanic text with a *ruku* (section) written on a single page.

Having noticed our keenness about the mini-sized Qur'aanic manuscripts the lady Director said to us, "Now please let me show you something really interesting, and it is a Qur'aanic manuscript inscribed on the leaves prior to the invention of paper. Interestingly, the leaves have been so preserved that they have escaped the damage normally caused by wear and tear." I took it in my hand and felt that it seemed like a tree-leaf with its spreading tissues being visible. Yet the Qur'aan was inscribed on it by hand. For two reasons I was very happy to see a thing of the early centuries of Islam. First, what awe-inpsiring feats the pious souls of the early period of Islam had done for the preservation of Religion! Second, I was lucky enough to see a thing which pertained to the days following the Prophetic era. I kissed that Qur'aanic manuscript and touched it against my eyes. Maulana Ahmed Khan said to me, "Hazrat, through your blessing I was graced with seeing this rare manuscript too. Otherwise I would have

been deprived of it." I thanked the librarian and the lady Director of the Library and left with best wishes for them.

Art of Calligraphy

While returning from the library Maulana Abdullah said to me, "Hazrat, marvellous are the achievements of our predecessors. The performance of our calligraphers is just matchless: I related to him a few incidents about calligraphers.

(1) The art of calligraphy, writes Ibn Khaldun, is peculiar to humans alone and distinguishes between man and animal. This art, called as *Daka-Himyri* in olden days, came to Arabia from the Tubba people who were an advanced nation of Yemen. From Yemen it reached the people of Hirah and later it was learnt by the people of Taif and the Quraysh. The Egyptians acquired this art from Hirah as well. Later the Andalusians took it to its heights and their script was considered as the best in Arabia and Africa. With the Muslims the art of calligraphy reached its zenith and many new scripts---*Kufic*, *Naskhi, Nasta'liq*, *Kharositi*, *Khatimas* etc.--- were developed by them.

(2) The Muslim calligraphers also developed quick writing (shorthand) and minute writing as forms of art. The *Naskhi* script was named after Ismaeel bin Abdullah Nasikh who also excelled in the *Ghubar* script and quick writing. He was so uniquely adept at minute writing that he would write the

Qur'aanic *Surah Ikhlas* (The Unity) on a single rice-grain. Once he wrote down *Ayatul Kursi* (The Chair) on a single rice-grain. He died in 788 A.H.

(3) Hassan bin Shahab Askari was matchless in rapid writing. He would copy down Arabic poet Motanabbi's Divan within three nights. He died in 428 A.H.

(4) Shaykh Ali Muttaqi Hindi Burhanpuri arranged Allama Sayyuti's book,, *Jama-ul-Javamay*, on the basis of jurists' chapters. His teacher, Shaykh Abu al-Hassan Bakri, said, "The learned men are indebted to Allama Sayyuti and Allama Sayyuti is indebted to Ali Muttaqi." Shaykh Ali Muttaqi offered Allama Abdul Wahab Shairani one hand-written page as a gift. The whole Qur'aan was written by him on that single page with the quarter-Part being covered by each line. He died in 975 A.H.

(5) Allama Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Abdullah Khurasani would write 640 lines on a single page of paper.

(6) Aurangzeb Alamghir, the Mughal Emperor, would write the copies of the Holy Qur'aan with his own hands and sell them to meet his expenditures.

(7) Our pious predecessors would impart religious education to their daughters. These girls used to copy down the Holy Qur'aan in beautiful handwriting to be bound in a golden binding. On their marriage there well-bound Qur'aanic manuscripts were given in their dowries.

Tomb of Shah Zindah

From the library we went straight to the Shah Zindah graveyard. Situated on a Hilltop it has a carved wooden gate bearing the following (Arabic) couplet:

عجلوا بالصلوة قبل الفوت
عجلوا بالتوبة قبل الموت

"Do your Prayer without wasting a moment before its time is lost. Make haste in repenting before death.

Outside the gate there lies a mosque which had been converted into a pub by the Russians. After its cleansing and readjustment Prayer has been instituted here. If you enter the graveyard through the main gate you will face stairs with about twenty-foot width.

The Uzbek people proverbially say that if anybody counts the stairs while going up and coming down and the count does not tally, he is supposed to be a sinner. He is advised to keep ascending and descending till the count tallies. On both sides of the stairs there stand cupolas in which celebrities including Timurid princesses are buried. Also lies amidst them the tomb of Amir Timur's sister with two thousand glazed tiles of blue, green and red colours covering a space of one square meter and is still intact. Alongside it stands the beautiful tomb of Amir Timur' niece. The Uzbek people say that she died at the age of 16 and a

ravishing beauty like her is yet to be born again. This offered me a moment of thought about the transitory and illusory seductions of life. Amir Timur, it is said, would emphatically tell people to make the graves of divines after performing their ablutions and this used to be his own practice prior to visiting the graves. Many names carved on the gravestones were still extant and some carvings dated back to a millennium. Inscription in white stone was particularly beautiful.

When we ascended a good number of stairs we caught sight of a huge carved door on the right side. On its one side the engraving read: ابواب الجنة للفقراء "Doors of paradise are for fakirs." The one on the other side read: ابواب الرحمة للرحماء "Doors of mercy are for the kind-hearted."

We were surprised to notice that the lapse of 1000 years had hardly affected this wooden door. When we entered there stood before us a mosque which had been built to commemorate the memory of Qitham bin Abbas. Historically speaking, Qitham bin Abbas was the brother of Abdullah bin Abbas and cousin of the Holy Prophet. He was one of the blessed few who had participated in washing the body of the Prophet and putting it into the grave. In 45 A.H. he took the message of Islam to this land and converted thousands of people to Islam. Once he was busy doing his Eid Prayer that infidels put him to martyrdom. For it he came to be known as 'Shah Zinda" (the Living

Chief). His name was carved on a big stone at the door with the following Hadith "Qitham bin Abbas has striking resemblance to the Prophet both in respect of facial expressions and good manners."

There were several retreat-cells outside the tomb. When walking pass them we came closer to the Companion's grave we felt there an uncanny overwhelming spiritual aura. The following Qur'aanic verse was engraved on the grave.

ولا تحسبن الذين قتلوا فى سبيل الله امواتا

"But do no think of those that have been slain in Allah's cause as dead. (3:169)

There was a retreat-point in the cellar beneath the grave. As a display of special favour to us when the superintendent unlocked it we found ourselves on a strange winding path. We came across a room, then another room and then a narrow place just opposite to the grave. That was a place where towering Sufis like Abu Yazid Bistami and Abu al-Hassan Kharqani used to sit in meditation. I also sat there in meditation and felt a uniquely stirring and reinvigorating experience regarding my *Lataif* (subtle points of body). Later I offered two non-obligatory cycles of Prayer in a nearby masjid and prayed for friends. We visited the grave of renowned traditionist Darmi thereafter and sent up prayers to his soul. Then we came back.

Masjid Bibi Khanum

This beautiful masjid (mosque) is situated near the Raighastan Chowk. Different narrations go about it. One narration says that this masjid was built by Amir Timur himself. According to another account it was built by Bibi Khanum, Amir Timur's consort of Chinese descent, when he had gone on an expedition to India. This masjid was a gift to Amir Timur from Bibi Khanum. Yet the scandalmongers gave it a twist and mendaciously made out of it a love affair between Bibi hanum and the architect. What plausibly sent credence to it was a royal edict issued by Amir Timur on his return from India ordering all women of his empire to observe purdah. The masjid is so splendid that it looks like a well-adorned bride. From there we proceeded to visit the Ghore Amir (Amir's mausoleum).

Ghore Amir

On a far end of Samarkand lies the Ghore Amir where Amir TImur and his family members are buried. Amir Timur had got built this greenish-blue domed mausoleum on the death of his grandson Mohammad Sultan but after a few years in 1405 he himself was buried in it too. It is worth mentioning that Amir Timur's Shaykh (spiritual director), Mir Saeed, is also buried in this tomb. Amir Timur's head lies toward Mir Saeed's feet. It was Amir Timur's devotion to saints, they

say, that God made him a great conqueror of the world. Also the title of "Amir Alam" (World Ruler) is inscribed on the door of his mausoleum. This is just possible that this devotion would become the cause of his redemption in the hereafter.

Amir Timur had four sons; two of them are buried in his ancestral city, Sabz. Yet two others, a Shahrukh and Miran Shah, are buried beside him. The grave of his learned grandson Ulugh Beg is also in the same mausoleum. Ulugh Beg's scientific ideas had made a great stir in the conservative circles of his time. His own son Abdul Latif stood on the front burner of opposition to his unorthodox views and later put him to death. Abdul Latif is buried in the same mausoleum too. What an irony of fate that the eternal abode of a man who once ruled over a vast empire hardly exceeds a space of few square yards, accommodating his three generations at that! Here the feeling of illusory life overwhelmingly came over my heart with a spontaneous sense of repugnance to the ever-changing world.

Amir Timur's grave is made of dark green stones presently unavailable in the whole of Central Asia, rather China as well. The mystery of this stone's place of origin is still unravelled. Yet going into the deeper layers of phenomena, the exterior beauty of a thing is of no use. An admirable thing in the real sense is man's excellent conduct during his ephermal earthly life which will turn his grave into

a heavenly garden, no matter if the grave is made of mud-bricks.

Imam Abu Mansur Matoreedi رحمه الله

Our next point of quest took us to the narrow lanes of old Samarkand where the vehicle could not be turned round easily. Here we saw the old-typed houses made of stones. Even an ordinary man could feel the descending heavenly lights in this whole area. Our predecessors, now permanently stationed in paradise, were born and brought up in these places. In fact the tenure of their earthly life was truly redolent of God-consciousness.

Here we reached a house where lies the grave of Imam Abu Mansur Matoreedi رحمه الله. The Communists would mostly wipe out all traces of such places. But in order to preserve them the Muslims built their houses there in such a way that a grave was made part of a room. After emancipation from the Communist rule they, however, built houses at new sites in order to enable people to visit these places easily.

Graveyard of Traditionists

Not far from here is a graveyard which has been named after the Traditionists (Hadith Teachers). There were two conditions for the burial of an exegete or a Traditionist in it. First he must be an acknowledged authority; second,

Mohammad must be the name. The management people so strictly abided by these conditions that when the citizens wanted to bury here a luminary like Hidayah's author Qadi Burhanuddin al-Marghinani ؒ they refused on the ground that his name was not Mohammad. Four hundred divines having the name of Mohammad are buried in this graveyard.

Jurist Abu al-Layth Samarkandi ؒ

Abu Layth, a Samarkand-rooted jurist, enjoyed a widespread reputation for his God-consciousness and dedication to religion. Indeed through his book Tanbihul-Ghafileen (Warning to the Negligent) he awakened the people from slumber.

It is related that once he set out on a journey carrying, to people's surprise, more clods of earth than his luggage. Someone asked him, "Why do you carry along so much load with syou?" He replied, "I use them for purification after the call of nature. I don't want to pick up even a clod of earth from the field of somebody without his permission."

When I inquired about the location of his grave most of the ulema told me that it was included among the places which had been bulldozed by the Russian Communists for constructing roads and modern buildings. Yet this anonymity has not barred him from enjoying the bliss of his *barzakh* or imaginal life. We however did some Qur'aan reading and sent up prayers to the benefit of his soul.

Khawjah Saeed bin Uthman رضي الله عنه

He was Caliph Uthman's son and grandson of the Prophet ﷺ. First he came to Bukhara and then settled in Samarkand where many people were brought to the fold of Islam by him. He lived in the suburbs of Samarkand. Once the unbelievers pounced upon him outside his house and put him to death. His grave was made in his house and a magnificent mosque was constructed near it with ramparts on four sides. Here too we sent up prayers to benefit his soul and sat in meditation for some time.

Khawjah Ubaydullah Ihrar رحمة الله عليه

Khawjah Ubaydullah Ihrar رحمة الله عليه was one of the great Sufi masters of the Naqshbandiah Order. God had bestowed on him so much wealth that his camels and horses were tethered to pegs of silver and gold. When Maulana Abdur Rahman Jami رحمة الله عليه came with the intention of being initiated into the Naqshbandiah Order under his spiritual guidance he became hesitant and doubtful when he saw the splendour and grandeur of Khawjah Ihrar. Reading Maulana Jami's mind the Khawjah observed "These pegs of silver and gold are meant for being driven into the ground and not into the hearts."

Khawjah Ihrar رحمة الله عليه used to say, "If I had simply brought people under discipleship, no Shaykh woud have found any

disciple on earth. But I have been brought into life for a great mission, that is, for the revival of Sunnah." Even the contemporary rulers would pay visits to him. His grave lies on a terrace with a royal mosque built nearby. Opposite to it is a pool which is surrounded by tall trees. Like the Raighastan Madresahs there is a madresah which runs under the supervision of the Grand Mufti of Samarkand.

In the neighbourhood of Khawjah lhrar's tomb there lived an Imam Rajab Ali who held unorthodox opinions. Being curious, he gathered information about me. It surprised him why did the Grand Mufti of Samarkand enter the discipleship of a young Sufi like me? Eventually he met me and said, "I want to put a few questions to you." I told him if it was not beyond my ken I would answer. First he asked me to enumerate the whole chain of my spiritual pedigree reaching to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. I immediately did it accordingly. Next he asked me to explain Heart Remembrance. I did it too. Again he concentrated on an inquiry about Epistles of Imam Rabbani (the celebrated Shaykh Ahmed Sirhindi رحمة الله). Wnen at last he was responded satisfactorily to all his questions he opened to me what lay at his heart, "Please just tell me how did you become a Shaykh (spiritual director) at such a young age?" Ramming my staff on the ground I told him, "Maulana! I haven't become myself, somebody has made me." When Rajab Ali heard this he was overpowered by a wave of awe and his rudeness

changed into softness and humility. In fact he had no justification for being repellent towards me.

Tomb of Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه

The prince of Traditionists, Imam Mohammad bin Ismail Bukhari رحمة الله عليه, was born in Bukhara in 194 AH on Friday. In childhood he was deprived of his eyesight on account of some disease. But responding to his saintly mother's persistent, single-minded and passionate prayers God not only restored his eyesight but also opened his inner eye. His father, a contemporary of Rabiah and favourite pupil of Abdullah bin Mubarak رحمة الله عليه, was a renowned Traditionist too. Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه used to say, "My father Ismail saw Hamad bin Zayd رحمة الله عليه shake hands (with both hands) with Abdullah bin Mubarak رحمة الله عليه."

His father died when he was a child. The responsibility of his moral and mental discipline fell to the lot of his virtuous and God-devoted mother. At the age of 16 he went for Hajj along with his mother for Haj and devoted two years to studying Hadith at Makkah. Thereafter he came to Madinah and sitting close to the Prophet's tomb he wrote in moonlit evenings his two well-known books, *Qadhaya as-Sahabah* and *Tab'ieen* and *at-Tareekh-ul-Kabir*.

He was instructed in Hadith by 1080 divines yet he was particularly benefited from Ishaq bin Rahviah and Ali bin al Medinee. He had an exemplary memory. The ulema of

Baghdad wanted to put him to test by transposing 100 Ahadith (Traditions) but were convinced of his learning and scholarship. Imam Bukahri inherited a lot of wealth from his father but he spent it in the way of Allah and adopted the practice of taking little food. Shah Waliullah رحمة الله عليه writes that sometimes he would live only on three almonds all the day. Once he fell ill and the physician who examined his urine said, "This man does not take curry." When asked he said that he had taken curry twenty years ago.

Once Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه uttered the Prayer-ending greeting of Peace and told his pupil: "Look at my back." On lifting up the shirt the pupil saw that a wasp had stung the Imam's back at 17 points and it had swollen. Someone asked him as to why he had not ceased the Prayer. He replied: "I was reciting a Surah and I thought that it should be completed." Imam Muslim رحمة الله عليه observed about his learning and excellence: اشهد انه ليس فى الدنيا مثلك "I stand witness that none is like you in the world."

Enormous was his portion of worldly trials and tribulations as well On his visit to Naishapur people came out of the city to welcome him. According to Imam Muslim رحمة الله عليه, never before even any ruler was accorded such an enthusiastic reception. When he started lecturing in Hadith people would throng the mosque and assemble on rooftops of the nearby houses. Being jealous of his popularity the ill-disposed elements brought on some misunderstanding

between him and Imam Zehli رحمۃ اللہ علیہ on the uncreated Qur'aan polemic. Later they fanned the controversy. Since the people of Naishapur followed Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal رحمۃ اللہ علیہ they became unsympathetic towards him. The result was when Imam Bukhari رحمۃ اللہ علیہ left Naishapur nobody came to see him off. A strange irony of fate put his arrival and departure in two sharply contrasting lights.

Bukhara's ruler, Khalid, also turned against Imam Bukhari because he had refused to teach his children at his residence. He was compelled to leave Bukhara and when he proceeded to Samarkand the local ulema refused him entry to the city. He was left with no choice but to stay at his maternal aunt's house near Samarkand and he died in 256 AH at the age of 62.

Scent kept exuding from his grave for several days after his burial. Unlike other people I am not surprised at this miraculous phenomenon. To quote Persian poet-sage Sa'di:-

جمال ہمنشیں در من اثر کرد

وگرنہ من ہماں خاکم کہ ہستم

"The Beauty of the Companion left its mark on me,
otherwise I am the same earth, unchanged.

Ninety thousand pupils read Saheeh Hadith directly under his tutelage. Ulema of all shades of opinion have tried to associate themselves with him. But the fact is that he

would think quite independently with regard to juridical maters and hermeneutic interpretations.

Shah Waliyullah, one of the great divines of the subcontinent, says that one who rejects the authority of Saheeh Bukhari is a heretic and goes against the collective Muslim opinion. Ulema are of the view, "Fiqh of Bukhari is in its translations." Neither did Imam Bukhari take any tradition from Imam Abu Hanifah, nor from Imam Ja'afar Sadiq, nor from Imam Shafi'i. He however quotes Imam Malik on five traditions and Imam Ahmed on two traditions alone. In fact he thought there were countless people referring Ahadith (Prophetic sayings) to I'mmah Mujtahideen (self-opinioned Imams). Instead he thought of referring to a chain of reliable reporters lest their reports should fall into oblivion. *Tadma's* mentions more than 100 commentaries, footnotes and accessories relating to the Bukhari, but *Fathul Bari* is the most distinguished of all of them.

Hafiz Ibn Kathir is reported to have said that the reading of the Bukhari wipes out famine and its blessing causes rainfall during a period of drought. A traditionist read it for one hundred and twenty times for different purposes and he met success every time. Ulema say that the reading of the Saheeh Bukhari is an antidote to drought, food shortage, diseases and fear and domination of enemies.

On 28 May 1992 I took along with me the Grand Mufti of Samarkand and other friends and we set off on a road journey towards Khartang which is 22 miles away form Samarkand and a burial place of Imam Bukhari. Fruit gardens stood on both sides of the wide road. Imam Bukhari's tomb precedes the Khartang town. First we went straight to the tomb and sent prayers to his soul. I told Hafiz-ul-Hadith (one who has learnt Hadith by heart) Maulana Mohammad Ja'fer to recite some Ahadith (Traditions or Prophetic sayings) from the Bukhari Sharif. When he started recitation we felt as if it was Imam Bukhari who was sitting before us and reciting Ahadith. Most of us were weeping. So intense and overpowering was the inrush of Divine lights and blessings that words are too inadequate to match it. Those moments have now flowed into sweet reminiscences of the past.

After sending the recompense of the scriptural reading and prayers to the soul of great Muhadith (Traditionist) we entered the mosque and students of Imam Bukhari Madresah welcomed us. On being free of devotions Imam–Khateeb Uthman Khan told me to deliver a lecture. I spoke on the subject of knowledge in inarticulate Arabic. Maulana Abdullah did its translation. Yet Uthman Khan seemed to be much impressed by my lecture and told me to stay with him for three days. I accepted the offer. For me he got unlocked the guest chamber which had been built by the government for the stay of special foreign guests, whereas my companions

stayed in the masjid. For three days his generous hospitality was beyond all expectations. I spent most of the time in meditation at the tomb of Imam Bukhari. As soon as I was free, the eagerly waiting people would cluster round me to be initiated. Thank God, apart from Uthman Khan and madresah teachers and students, the sanctuary keeper and hundreds of pilgrims also took the initiatory oath at my hands.

There was a Qur'aan library attached to the tomb of Imam Bukhari where the copies of the Holy Qur'aan printed in the different countries were placed. A copy had also been shelved there in compliance with the request of General Zia-ul- Haq Shaheed, former President of Pakistan. Uthman Khan told me, "Hazrat, you please send for a Qur'aanic copy from Pakistan too. We shall keep it here as your souvenir." I sent for a beautifully printed copy through Yaqoob Tabani and dispatched it to them.

On the second and the third day the delegations of ulema and pious men coming from mountainous areas kept entering the Naqshbandiah Order through me. Maulana Abdullah was surprised as to who informed and induced these people that they came down in an ecstatic fashion. On one occasion Uthman Khan told me, "Hazrat, here Allah has dealt you what has been reported in a tradition: ثم يوضع له القبول في الارض 'His acceptability was established on earth'.

A Memorable Meditation

On the third day of my stay I went to the tomb of Imam Bukhari after putting up *Tahajjud* Prayer (midnight Prayer). Since I had met all friends I intended to leave for Bukhara. Yet I deemed it fit that prior to departure I should sit in meditation at Imam Bukhari's tomb so as to partake of the Divine lights which were descending there. But I was beside myself in the meditation. Only God knows in what ecstatic state an hour passed. Yet this much is certain that the intensity of my heart's attachment to the Prophetic Tradition surged up after this meditation. I felt as if a light emanating from the Heart of Imam Bukhari had penetrated my Heart and in fact I kept feeling its blessings all along the journey.

Bukhara- a Historical City

History tells us that Bukhara is not simply a few centuries old city, rather it existed centuries before the birth of Prophet Jesus Christ (AS). When Alexander the Great marched past here it was already a hub of trade and culture. In the beginning, the Buddhist people lived here and they named their place of worship as Yahrah which with the passage of time first changed into Bakhara and later it permanently came to be known as Bukhara. This city was an important centre of the Zoroastrians till the 8th century. When in 712 Mohammad bin Qasim crossed into Sindh through the Arabian Sea an Arab general, Qataibah ibn Muslim,

contemporaneously enter Central Asia by crossing the Amu Darya. Qataibah took over Bukhara and Samarkand and extended his conquests up to Sinkiang and Kashghar. This Muslim thrust into Central Asia was of military nature; whereas, ideologically speaking, Islam had been brought here by Qitham Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه and Saeed bin Uthman bin Affan رضي الله عنه long ago.

When we crossed the Zarafshan Darya and reached Bukhara's suburbs a big gate between the two minarets came into our view. That was the last surviving gate out of its four gates and along with it the portion of a destroyed wall was also visible. In the ninth Hijrah century Bukhara was the capital of the Samanid empire whose frontiers stretched up to Herat (Afghanistan) and Isphahan (Iran). The population of Bukhara was three lakh at that time and there were 250 madresahs where seekers of knowledge came even from far-off lands like Yemen and Andalus.

Apart from theology and fiqh the students were also given lessons in medicine, mathematics, astronomy as well as other branches of learning. In brief Bukhara was a cradle of culture and knowledge and was on a par with Baghdad. The personal library of the Samanid ruler alone had 45000 books. Hussain Ibn Abdullah Ibn Sina had benefited from this very library. It was Ibn Sina, known in the West as Avicenna who first turned Aristotle's books into Arabic. Later he wrote al-

Qanoon which for centuries had been a textbook of European universities and is indeed an encyclopedia of medicine.

Madresah Mir Arab

When we reached Bukhara nobody was acquainted with us there. We knew only this much that there was a certain Madresah Mir Arab and attached to it was Masjid Imam Bukhari where lam Bukhari used to give lessons in Hadith at a certain period of time. Originally it was named as Amir Arab but three centuries back it came to be called by its present name. The following Hadith is inscribed on the huge gate of Mir Arab Madresah:

من كان فى طلب العلم كانت الجنت فى طلبه

"Paradise remains in the quest of that person who remains in the quest of knowledge.

About 200 students could be housed in this beautiful two-storey madresah which luckily escaped the clutches of Russian revolutionaries and now it is one of the big madresahs of Uzbekistan. When we reached there it was a Friday off and the students had already left for their homes but few teachers were present. On our introduction they entertained us with tea and then one of them requested me to deliver the Friday sermon in Imam Bukhari Masjid.

A Memorable Sermon

It was almost Prayer time and we came into the masjid which stood in front of the Madresah across a pool. The masjid was spacious enough to accommodate at least 50,000 worshippers. It had been so constructed that even if a speech was made without a loudspeaker the waves of voice reached the ears of the audience after striking against the walls. For some time we sat in the room of Imam Khateeb Maulana Jan Mohammad and he continued enquiring about the circumstances of Pakistan. Then he introduced Maulana Abdul Latif to us and said that he was the Chairman of Uzbekistan's federation of madresahs and had come to examine the students. Earlier it was decided, he further said, that Maulana Abdul Latif would deliver the Friday sermon. But when the Maulana saw your face he said, "This Shaykh will deliver today's sermon and I would interpret him."

There was a capacity audience in the masjid. I recited some Verses regarding glory of the Holy Qur'aan and putting it on my head said: "It is a weighty trust." My remarks stunned the audience. Maulana Abdul Latif was gazing at my face with such look as if he had found someone after a lot of effort. My speech was so spontaneous and moving that the audience started weeping. Maulana Abdul Latif was enthusiastically interpreting me with weeping eyes and this made others weep more intensely. In fact the Qur'aan was making its way through the hearts of the audience and my

sermon delivered in Arabic sent them into raptures. After the Friday Prayer an Arab youth embraced me and said, "You have revived to us the days of Imam Bukhari رحمه الله." An Uzbek young man came forward and gave me such a strong hug which left me unable to breath smoothly for sometime. Then he told me, "You have won the hearts of the Bukhara people." I was sweating profusely on account of a tumultuous crowd that closed in on me. Maulana Jan Mohammad gestured to some young men who took me in their circle, telling people that they should simply shake hands with me. Thank God, I was thus able to shake hands with all the audience. The superintendent of Madresah Mir Arab told me, "Hazrat, the lunch is ready. You should make haste to take your leave of the crowd." When we reached the superintendent's house we saw that he had made dining arrangements for about fifty people. A clean-shaven and westernized Turkish scholar came and sat close to me. The host introduced me to the audience including the economic affairs superintendent and the education superintendent of Madresah Mir Arab. The Turkish scholar asked me to introduce myself. Before I responded, Maulana Abdul Latif spoke up for me, "He is the chief of Naqshbandis world over." The Turkish scholar was surprised to hear it and asked, "On Pakistan level or global level?" The Maulana replied, "On global level, no doubt."

I reproached myself in my heart that despite my lowliness God was so kind to me. I persuaded myself that now I should be ever ready to sacrifice myself in His Name. The reply promptly came from my heart in the form of following verses:

یاد میں تیری سب کو بھلا دوں کوئی نہ مجھ کو یاد رہے
تجھ پر سب گھر بار لٹا دوں خانۂ دل آباد رہے
سب خوشیوں کو آگ لگا دوں غم سے ترے دل شاد رہے
سب کو نظر سے اپنی گرادوں تجھ سے فقط فریاد رہے
اب تو رہے بس تادم آخر ورد زباں اے میرے الہ
لا الہ الا اللہ ، لا الہ الا اللہ

"In Your remembrance I should forget all without exception. In Your way I should give away all I possess so that nothing lives in my heart except You.

I should kill all pleasures making my heart content with the flame of Your love alone. I should shed off everybody and all human resorts and only call You for help in all matters.

O my God, now I should keep chanting Your Name till my last breath—

there is no deity but Allah, there is no deity but Allah.

The mutton was roasted with such a knack that its smell whetted the appetite of everybody beyond control. When the host took the guests to the dining table all of them ate the meal with much relish.

Meeting with Taishah Baba

After enjoying the feast we revisited Maulana Jan Mohammad in Masjid Kalan. He told me, "My spiritual guide is one who presently gives guidance to all the ulema and virtuous men of Bukhara and is therefore called the Shaykh of Bukhara. His real name is Kabul Khan but is generally known as Taishah Baba. I have rung him up and he is about to come. For the last twenty years he has been ruling the roost in the spiritual shere of Bukhara and is currently the chief of the Naqshbandiah Order." When I heard all this I became more eager to see him. Meanwhile, Taishah Baba came and warmly embraced me. After the introduction he told me, "Last night I had a dream that a light was seeping into my home. I was surprised about its interpretation. Now after meeting you it has occurred to me that you are that light. Kindly do me a favour by visiting my home. I can spot the graves of the predecessors of the Naqshbandiah Order. I will take you there." I was already eagerly thinking how I should visit their graves. I was happy to learn of it. I told him that it would be my pleasure to do what he wanted.

From Masjid Kalan we went straight to Taishah Baba's house where some God-oriented men were already present. First we were entertained with tea and then we offered our *Asr* (mid-afternoon) Prayer. Thereafter some ulema came with some questions about the Naqshbandiah Order to which I gave replies. Taishah Baba witnessed all that with delight.

Meanwhile, al-Haaj Mukhtar, Imam-Khateeb of Masjid Shah Naqshband, came. When he was introduced to me he started asking me questions about the Epistles of Mujaddid Alf Thani Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi. The discussion went on from Naqshbandiah Way to Mujaddidiyah Way. When I brought the conversation to a conclusion Haji Mukhtar said, "Hazrat you have, in too short a time, so exquisitely and unambiguously unravelled the riddles which had resisted all our efforts for years." The sitting continued form the sunset Prayer to the bedtime Prayer and onward to midnight. When the audience felt sleep due to tiredness Taishah Baba caused me to pray prior to breaking up the sitting.

Taishah Baba led me in a room to get me to sleep. Since I was already tired I fell into sound sleep. When I woke up I came out of the room to perform ablution. I saw to my surprise that in spite of severe cold Taishah Baba was sitting on a couch at the door. I told him, "Why don't you come in the room, sir?" He told me that I was resting in the room and he was serving as a gatekeeper. Having said this he embraced me and added, "Could a fakir like me have the good luck to

partake of your spiritual riches too?" I told him that he was a great Shaykh (Sufi master) himself. When after putting up my Tahajjud Prayer I was about to sit in meditation Taishah Baba came and sat before me in a respectful posture. He told me, "Kindly tone up my lataif (spiritual substances). I had taken lessons from my Shaykh up to *muraqbah maiyyat* (Meditation of Companionship). Now you are my Shaykh. Please initiate me into Mujaddidi lessons. Taishah Baba said this and burst into weeping. Tears kept trickling down his cheeks non-stop. Tears welled up in my eyes too. Both of us kept weeping for quite some time. At last I initiated him as my disciple with Mujaddidi lessons.

Masjid Abu Hafs Kabeer رحمة الله عليه

After taking our breakfast we came to Masjid Abu Hafs Kabeer رحمة الله عليه. It was built in the memory of Abu Hafs Kabeer رحمة الله عليه who was one of the eminent pupils of Imam Mohammad رحمة الله عليه. His grave is situated on a hillock near the mosque and alongside him are also buried 12 divines descending from Abdullah bin Abbas رحمة الله عليه. On visiting this place I did Qur'aan reading and sent up its reward to their souls. The Imam masjid entertained us with tea and mulberries. Visitors started trickling in soon. Taishah Baba, to my convenience introduced me to them. Maulana Abdullah was overjoyed to hear when Taishah Baba disclosed that he had become my disciple too. Maulana Abdullah was overpowered by emotions and kept weeping for quite some

time. In fact this disclosure by Taishah Baba dumbfounded the people of Bukhara and they would gaze at my face without any verbal expression. Such looks, reflecting utmost love and respect, had never come to my experience earlier. Taishah Baba told me that two vehicles had arrived to carry us to the tombs of the divines. He suggested to make haste, saying that sufficient time would be consumed by the whole process.

Sayyed Amir Kulal رحمة الله عليه

The vehicles started off from Bukhara and first of all we reached the grave of Sayyed Amir Kulal رحمة الله عليه. His grave is situated in a common graveyard which had been brought under cultivation by the Communists. Only those graves which stood on big terraces had survived and the rest of the place had been brought under cultivation. There was only a narrow space to stand beside the grave. First we sent up prayers to the soul of Sayyed Amir Kulal رحمة الله عليه and then sat in contemplation.

Ka'b Ahbar رحمة الله عليه

His grave, several meters long, is situated on a hillock. The lapse of centuries had left their mark on everything there and an atmosphere of desolation prevailed all around. The Communists had also demolished the stairs which took a visitor to the hillock. There was a mosque beside the grave where we offered two non-obligatory cycles of Prayer and

especially prayed for our friends. When we came down we were told by Taishah Baba that there was a well which had cool, tasty water and added that whenever our spiritual predecessors visited this place, they would drink water from this well. We became eager too. When we drank the water we really enjoyed it like a well-savoured drink.

QASR-E-ARFAN

The majestic historical structure of Qasr-e-Arfan, about 20 kilometers away from Bukhara, captivates one's attention from a distance. Historically speaking, its original name was Qasr-e- Hindwan. Once Baba Sammasi رحمة الله عليه and Sayyed Amir Kulal (R.A), two spiritual giants, visited this place. The host carried his three-day old son in their presence to have their blessings for him. Looking at the infant Baba Sammasi رحمة الله عليه told Sayyed Amir Kulal, "I am reading signs of blessedness on his forehead. If I remain alive I will personally take on his grooming, and if pass away you will do this job. When this child grows up he will become the Shaykh of our Order. I hope he will turn Qasr-e-Hindwan into Qasr-e- Arfan (Palace of Gnostics). Baba Sammasi's intuition indeed came true and this place is called Qasr-e-Arfan today.

When we reached Qasr-e-Arfan the congregational Prayer was being performed in the mosque. After the Prayer we met Imam-Khateeb (Prayer Leader) Haji Mukhtar. He took us into his closet where he held a sumptuous feast in our

honour. Then he asked me, "What is your programme?" I told him that according to the programme, we would spend a week in Bukhara and its suburbs. Haji Mukhtar laughingly said that even it were one month it would be less. Then he started talking about past decades. The Communists, he said, won't allow anybody to visit this shrine during their reign and they used the mosque as a godown. A policeman would always be on guard if he saw anybody come to this side he would arrest him and send him to jail.

After listening to him for quite some time I sought his permission to visit the shrine of Shah-e-Naqshband, great Khawjah Baha-ud-Din. Haji Mukhtar told me that both masjid and khanqah (monastery) were under repair. "When the repair work is finished we shall invite you to come along with your disciples and take the khanqah under your control," he added.

I went along with my companions to Shah-e-Naqshband's tomb which stood on a big platform. There we had, to our heartfelt desire, a long meditation. Like a small boy who is delighted by repeating ABC before a learned teacher we revised before Shah-e-Naqshband our spiritual lessons from the first to the last one, the Indeterminate Circle (*dairah-e-latayyun*).

God-devoted Men

After we finished praying a man whispered something in Maulana Abdullah's ear. Maulana Abdullah told me that a group of Sufis belonging to Transoxania were sitting in the mosque and eager to see me. I asked him as to who told them about me. Maulana Abdullah said: "God knows better." I told him, "All right, call them here." Almost 21 men aged between forty and sixty came walking with a graceful and impressive way. Thoroughly sunnah-observant they had illumined faces and glowing cheeks on account of perpetual remembrance of Allah and their facial expressions added by the prostration marks on their foreheads, reflected humility. When these Heart-oriented (inward looking) men looked at me they, driven by a flush of love, warmly embraced me and clung to my chest. Indeed each one of them gave me a long, fervent hug till I was exhausted. After taking their seat one of them told me that they had been associated with a Shaykh some time back. "His death drove us to a perplexing quest for a spiritual guide. For a long time we kept divining and praying with this object in view till one day we chalked out a programme to visit Shah-e-Naqshband's tomb and pray for the achievement of our object. On reaching here we found you along with your companion sitting in meditation and we decided to consign ourselves to your spiritual guidance. Now all of us are ready to be initiated. We have come from a far-off place. Though we are late, kindly accept us", he said.

I couldn't reject their insistence and thought perhaps anyone of them should become the cause of my redemption on . udgment Day. I therefore made them repeat the initiatory litany. That was an inspiring scene. On the one side stood the holy tomb of Shah-e-Naqshband and on the other side were the illumined faces of the gathering. After administering the oath of repentance I made them sit in meditation. To tell you the truth, I myself felt inspired by giving them attention during the meditative sitting. As you are pleased to pour milk into a clean, beautiful and transparent jug, similarly I felt delighted in giving them attention. On being free from meditation the visitors from Transoxania gave their addresses to Maulana Abdullah and left us with tearful eyes.

Meanwhile, a good number of pilgrims had assembled at the shrine of Shah-eNaqshband. All of them wanted to be initiated too and so did Abdul Wahid, the masjid muezzin. This caused the second round of pronouncing the initiatory litany. When I was telling them about the practices of the Naqshbandiah Order a group of girls appeared on the scene. They called Maulana Abdullah by gesture and kept asking him questions for some time. When I was free from the initiatory process Maulana Abdullah sat down beside me uttering, "strange, strange" with the shaking of his head. I asked him, "Maulana, what happened?" He told me, "A group of girls have come from Turkmenistan. They called me and expressed their strange impressions about you. They also

requested that they should be initiated into the spiritual order." When I wanted to know about their impressions, one girl was reported to have said, "If this man is present in a gathering all glances would fall upon his face." The second girl said, "The sight of his face gives peace of mind." The third one said, "A look at his face tells us that he is a messiah." Another girl spoke out from behind, "I feel as if he is a son of Shah-e-Naqshband." The group leader said, "Kindly convey my request to this Shaykh that instead of going back he should stay at Qasr-e-Arfan so that we may keep renewing our faith by seeing him. Communism has made us black-hearted. The presence of such men amongst us stimulates us to remember God, exposing sins as loathsome in our eyes.

Through Maulana Abdullah I made these girls pronounce the *bay'ah* (initiatory) litany, yet he explained to them the details of meditation and Heart-watch in the Russian language.

We took meal after saying *Isha* (night) Prayer and had a good sleep. But we got up for *Tahajjud* (post-midnight) Prayer and then did meditation at the Shah-e-Naqshband shrine up to *Fajr* (morning) Prayer. On being free from the devotional activity we were sitting in the closet that the Imam-Khateeb usually came earlier. He looked at me and said, "Your face is glowing at this moment. It appears that the outflow of a special *Nisbat* of Shahe-Naqshband had its

impact on you last night. Kindly give attention to my Heart as well." I identified his *Latifah Qalb* (subtle substance of Heart) by putting my finger on it. I have no words to tell you how overwhelmingly the Khateeb was enraptured by a mere finger-touch. Since we were scheduled to reach Ghijdawan next day, we left Qasr-e-Arfan at 12 noon with a sad heart and tearful eyes.

City of Khawjah-i-Jahan

Khawjah Abdul Khaliq Ghijdawani, a descendant of Imam Malik, was one of the most eminent luminaries of the Naqshbandiah Order. God had given him such popularity with people that they would call him Khawjah-i-Jahan (Master of the World). Khawja khidr had imparted to him the lesson of breath-controlled dhikr (remembrance of Allah) which is considered to be the essence of the Naqshbandiah order. The following aphorisms composed by him are considered to be the fundamental principles of the Naqshbandiah Order:

(1) *Khalwat dar anjaman* (Solitude in the Crowd)

(2) *Safar dar watan* (Journey Homeward)

(3) *Nazar bar qadam* (Watch Your Step)

(4) *Hosh dar dam* (Conscious Breathing)

(5) *Yad-kard* (Remembrance)

(6) *Baz-gasht* (Returning)

(7) *Nigahdasht* (Attention)

(8) *Yad-dasht* (Recollection)

The following three aphorisms are attributed to Shah-e-Naqshband:

(9) *Waquf zamani* (Awareness of Time)

(10) *Waquf adadi* (Awareness of Number)

(11) *Waquf qalbi* (Awareness of the Heart)

We reached Ghijdawan at 1pm and I asked some people about the location of Khawjah Abdul Khaliq Ghijdawani's shrine. But they were unable to help us. However a man told us that the saint was known in the city by the name of Khawjah-i-Jahan and he also located his masjid. We went there and performed our Prayer. Maulana Abdullah met the Imam-Khateeb in the closet and talked about me. The clean-shaven Imam, wearing Western dress, came in the mosque to see me. He proudly told me that he was invited to a function in which about 500 people, including the local administration officials, would participate and added that I should accompany him too. "We should preferably remain in masjid", I said. But he was adamant on taking me along with him. In fact the Khateeb wanted to impress on the administration that he was a much sought-after man. I reluctantly gave in to his insistence. We reached a big hotel in front of which there was a wide, open space where people were sitting in the chairs in small groups. A drinking bout

was going on and the scantily-clad Russian girls were offering cupfuls of wine to the guests. In their midst there was a mike on which some people were singing songs with the accompaniment of music. I told the Khateeb, "We people have nothing to do with such revelling. We want to go back." But the Khateeb was determined not to budge and this put us in a difficult situation.

We were still in a state of indecision that a timely help came from Allah. The music play and singing came to a halt and someone called the Khateeb, telling him if we wanted to say something we could come on the mike. Mentally I was not prepared for it but an idea flitting across my mind galvanized me. To quote an Urdu poet:

میر جمع ہیں احباب دردِ دل کہہ لے

پھر التفاتِ دلِ دوستاں نہ رہے

"O Mir, there is an assemblage of friends, let you relate your doleful story. Because the favour of friends may or may not remain.

I came on the mike and started making a speech in Arabic. Maulana Abdullah interpreted me. I told the audience that a great man of God like Khawjah-i-Jahan had spent his life in this city. We undertook a long journey only to visit his tomb. From here the talk ran to the God-oriented men and then to the theme of Divine love. So inspiring and spontaneous was the thematic development that all the sitting

groups turned their faces towards the mike with their gazes fixed upon me. The pedestrians stopped moving and the traffic jammed up. There was a pin-drop silence as if without even a stir in the air. My voice was resonating and the inimitability of the Qur'aan, so to speak, was tangibly in evidence. The city boss was all ears to me as if he was being briefed by his boss on some point. When I prayed after speaking for about half an hour people from all sides started greeting me. The local administration, being true to their tradition, made me wear an attractive garb. What is more, everybody was full of prays for the Khateeb for introducing me to the audience. Small wonder this changed his attitude and he became friendly to me. He requested me to stay at his residence.

Fear of Secret Police

Our night stay was with the khateeb-Imam. During the dinner a man was repeatedly gazing at me. When I glanced at him with dilated eyes, he said to me, "I am a local secret police official. People have been immensely impressed by your sermon today. I would like to remain with you for some time." After taking meal the general talk turned to Naqshbandiah Sufis. The sitting dispersed at midnight and we went to sleep.

I delivered the Friday sermon next day. The Khateeb-Imam took about half an hour to introduce me to the audience. After the Prayer people gathered to pledge their

allegiance to me. Yet their faces betrayed fear. When I asked Maulana Abdullah about its reason he pointed to the secret police official. I saw that he was the same man. I gestured to him to sit beside me. When the audience saw that he had sat down beside me they felt relaxed.

Two Trouble-Makers

When I started the sermon Maulana Abdullah began to turn it into the Uzbek language. Two men with Sufi dress and facade began to prompt the interpreter aloud. When I spoke they remained silent and when Maulana Abdullah began to interpret me they burst out noisily, posing to correct him here and there. We were in a fix. I continued my lecture and they equally continued disturbing the auspicious gathering. I felt unless I exerted my spiritual influence on them, they won't desist from their obstructive activity. At last I had to employ my weapon. In fact the two self-assertive fellows wanted to impress on the audience that they already knew what was being uttered by me. However, hardly a few minutes had passed that one of the two obstructionists loudly pronounced, "It is pretty late and we have to go home. Pray to God, please." I immediately lifted my hands and after the prayer both of them stood up, whereas everybody kept sitting at his place. They also gestured to some persons to move but none followed them. After their departure I was asked by the

audience to continue discoursing. Then the grace of Allah, I should say, rained down on the audience.

At the end of the sermon all the people were ready for *bay'ah* for which about fifty turbans were fastened together and spread between the rows of men so as to enable them to catch at the cloth and utter the initiatory oath. Maulana Abdullah explained to them *aurad-o-wadha'if* (devotional routines and incantations). When came the time to indentify *latifah-i-qalb* with my finger I was exhausted. Maulana Abdullah was standing in an erect position propping up my right arm from beneath because its muscular vitality had languished away on account of the long, ceaseless finger-movement in the Heart-identifying process. The monastery custodian was also invited and he requested me for an overnight stay at his residence.

Deputy Ruler's Visit

At about 10 am the deputy administrator of Ghijdawan came to the house of the custodian. Her name was Bakhshandah and she was escorted by some policemen. "Do you have any problem here?", she said to me. "It is a matter of immense pleasure for me that I am spending sometime in the city of Khawajah-i-Jahan", I replied. Bakhshandah told me, "Kindly remember me and my children in your prayers. We shall be eagerly looking forward to your future visits. As revealed to me in detail through the agency report of last

night's lecture, you have won the hearts of the city people." I said goodbye to them with prayers. The audience were surprised that God had even made the administration compliant to me. The monastery custodian sought my permission to video my programmes but I said 'no' to that. Then he told me, "Today we shall have our lunch at a place of lush greenery beneath which flows a stream overshadowed by the twigs of trees. We shall have siesta on the bank of the stream. I agreed to that and we reached the picnic-spot. Before lunch I bathed in the stream without putting off my clothes. The college days flashed back upon me during swimming. After that we took meal and had siesta. Later we put up the mid-afternoon Prayer in a mosque.

Meeting with Hazrat Gul Baba

Soon after the Prayer a 15-man group from Balkh called on me. Hazrat Gul Baba was their interpreter. All of them were initiated and devotional formulas explained to them by me. Hazrat Gul Baba had almost covered the apprenticeship of the Path and his approach to me was meant for a full-scale coverage. I was much delighted to see his illumined face. I told Maulana Abdullah as to how this man would have attained to this spiritual illumination. Hazrat Gul Baba expressed the desire to remain with me during my stay in Ghijdawan. I told him that we were ready to leave for Bukhara where we would be reaching at night. Tears welled

up into the eyes of Hazrat Gul Baba and he pathetically read the following Persian verse:

حیف در چشم زدن صحبت یار آخر شد
بوئے گل سیر نہ دیدیم و بہار آخر شد

"We parted from the company of the friend, alas, in the twinkling of an eye. Still we had not seen the face of flower to our heart's content that spring faded away.

Entrapped By Self-Device

When we were about to move out of Ghijdawan's principal masjid an important police officer came to see me. He disclosed in the presence of everybody that the secret police were present during my yesterday's lecture and they aimed to arrest me immediately if I tried to discuss politics. To the embarrassment of the administration, he said, a lot of men were put on the Path by you. There upon the custodian said, "I have hardly met in the bazaar a man who has not been initiated by him. Allah is so kind to him." The police boss said, "We have lagged behind. Kindly initiate us too." I identified *latifah-i-qalb* to the policemen and instructed them to practise *dhikr* (invocation of Allah's Name) and *moraqbah* (meditation) as well. Thereafter the police boss salaamed me by bowing his head and went away. When I wanted to know

about the police boss the custodian said, "He is the Superintendent Police of this city." I remarked,

شکار کرنے کو آئے شکار ہو کے چلے

"He has fallen into his own trap.

Malaysian Minister

After departing from Ghijdawan we reached the Imam Bukhari Masjid where the Malaysian Foreign Minister was coincidentally also present there. When he saw me he came to me. He made salaam to me and sought my blessings. I prayed for the whole audience. During dinner Maulana Jan Mohammad quoted the Malaysian Foreign Minister as saying, "The sight of this Shaykh has given me a strange peace of mind." I told him, "Maulana, it is this quest for peace which prompts the rich to stand at the door of a fakir." Thereafter Maulana Jan Mohammad took us to the monastery of Taishah Baba. Taishah Baba again made me sleep in his chamber at night and he himself spent the whole night sitting at the door outside. I could not sleep for it. Once I came out of the room and requested Taishah Baba to take rest in a room. He began to weep and told me, "I have received this blessing by luck. Kindly don't deprive me of it."

I silently got back in the room and lay down. After Tahajjud Prayer Taishah Baba sat down before me in this position that his knees were touching mine. Gabriel عليه السلام (archangel), as goes the Hadith of Gabriel, had similarly sat

before the Holy Prophet ﷺ in this respectful position. Taishah Baba told me to give him attention. I asked him to practise meditation and then remember Allah for a little while. He clung to me during meditaion and it appeared as if tears were raining down from his eyes. After the morning Prayer Taishah Baba divulged to Maulana Abdullah, "I have been associated with the men of God for the last 60 years but the attention of this Shaykh has done something which is no mean feat." He added, "Now the Name of Allah is oozing from every pore of my body." Next morning Taishah Baba himself informed the audience about the renewing of his initiatory oath.

Visitors from Dushanbe

Next day a 15-member group of young men from Dushanbe (Tajikistan) visited the house of Taishah Baba. I perceived an uncanny light on the foreheads of the flowering youths. The group leader told me that they had started from their country in order to visit the tombs of different Shaykhs. When they came to the Shrine of Shah-e-Naqshband at Qasr-e-Arfan the muezzin told them: "A Naqshbandi Shaykh has arrived from Pakistan. The very sight of his face cuts the Gordian knot of one's Heart for the inflow of Divine grace." This made them too eager and impatient. All of them decided to meet the Shaykh wherever he might be. "We have reached here after collecting information from different sources", the group leader added.

I have no words to express the happiness of Taishah Baba. He entertained all of them with tea. Later an edifying discourse was touched off. The gist of my talk was that youth spent in a devotional way has a zest of its own. On it I quoted a number of Traditions and mentioned biographic events relating to many a Shaykh. This inspired listeners so much that they become tearful. Then I made them perform meditation during which I recited some Persian verses. Since the language of the delegation youths was Persian they came under a state of ecstasy and started rolling about. Verses started trickling into my memory from my unconscious mind too. The following verse sent their ecstasy to the highest pitch:

در جوانی توبہ کردن شیوہ پیغمبری
وقت پیری گرگ ظالم می شود پرہیزگار

"To abstain from sins in youth is the prophetic way because even a pitiless sadist becomes pious in old age.

After the meditation the young men told me to accept their three requests. First, I should accept them as my disciple. Second, I should dictate to them the verses which I had recited during the meditation so that they might get inspired by reciting them repeatedly. Third, they told me to accept their request for visiting Dushanbe. I administered the initiatory oath to all of them, explaining the modality of

meditation in detail, and also dictated to them the verses under reference. I told them, "I have made up my mind to visit Dushanbe but I can't fix the date. Give me your address. Either you will be informed by telegram, or I shall myself reach your place." Maulana Abdullah said, "I have been to Dushanbe. By the grace of God we shall be able to reach there." When I wanted to know Taishah Baba's intention regarding this journey he expressed his inability to go with us on account of old age. He told me if he were a young man he would have been overjoyed and eagerly ready to accompany me to Dushanbe. The group of the pious young men departed from us next morning.

Khawjah Mahmud Ali Faghnavi رحمة الله عليه

After taking breakfast we set out to visit shrines. First of all we reached the Faghnah area. Fifty miles away from Bukhara it is a rural place having a masjid, a well and a home. Close to it is the shrine of Khawjah Mahmud رحمة الله عليه. There is no human habitation for miles around. Fig produced in this area, according to Taishah Baba, is very delicious. For this reason Khawjah Mahmud came to be known as the (Anjir) Fig of Faghnah. We sent up prayers to his soul, performed meditation for a while and then started off for the next place.

Khawjah Mohammad Arif Mah-e-Taban رحمة الله عليه

While on our way to Ramitan from Faghnah we came across a town. Taishah Baba told me that long ago a saint, namely Khawjah Mohammad Arif رحمة الله عليه, had been living at this place and he was so handsome that people would call him "Mah-eTaban" (Shining Moon). "We may offer prayers at his shrine to benefit his soul if you like", he added. In response I recited the following Persian verse:

بآں گروہ کہ از ساغر وفا مستند
سلام ما برسانید ہر کجا ہستند

"Convey our salaam to that group who are intoxicated by the cup of love, wherever they may be.

This enraptured Taishah Baba and he glanced at me saying, "blessing, blessing." The government has built a masjid near the shrine. Since there is sufficient endowment land, the shrine exists in its corners. A high wall has been built round the whole place which is now part of the city. After sending prayers to the soul of the saint we left for the next destination.

Khawjah Azizan Ali Ramitani رحمة الله عليه

Ali was the real name of Azizan Ali with his pen-name being Azizan because he also composed poetry in Persian.

Hence he was reputedly called as Azizan Ali. It is stated that once a young, beautiful daughter of the contemporary ruler fell ill. Pimples had erupted on her whole body and despite the treatment of so many physicians she remained uncured. Somebody told the king that since medicine had proved ineffective; let the efficacy of prayer be tested. So the ruler took his daughter to Khawjah Azizan Ali who gave him some mantra-infused water and said that she should take bath with it. Miraculously, she was cured. On account of such an unexpected happening this place was called “Aaram Tan” (Body Curing) which gradually came to be known as Ramitan.

The shrine of the Khawjah exists on a mount in the neighbour of which flows a riverlet. After sending up prayers to his soul we performed meditation and set out for the next destination.

Khawjah Baba Samasi

The shrine of Khawjah Baba Samasi is only a few miles away from Ramitan with the sprawling fields all around. A garden planted by Baba Samasi still exists there. Originally water was unavailable there. One day, uttering ‘Allah’ he rammed his staff in the ground and water welled up from it. Later on people gave this spot the shape of a well. A pond of stagnant water can be seen there even today. There are tall trees around it. This place is so beautiful, comforting and peaceful that in the whole of my journey I

hardly saw a suitable spot like it for the remembrance of Allah. Most of my companions thought that flowers and plantation were conducive to fostering such a feeling. Yet I believed since Baba Samasi رحمه الله was overpowered by Divine love, its effects on this place were still in evidence there. This was corroborated by the fact that even negligent people like us could not help but feel the ecstatic delight of God's remembrance at this place. One of them said, "We are unconsciously feeling the burst of Divine Love." I was, on my part, imagining a situation when Amir Kulal would call on Baba Samasi to give him a good company in the silence of wilderness.

One of the wooden doors of the masjid built by Baba Samasi is still extant in its original form. When we were free from meditation and prayerful doing the custodian of the sanctuary invited us to lunch.

Two Old Chums Meet

On the advice of Taishah Baba we accepted the invitation. The custodian also invited the ulema and divines living in the immediate vicinity. Gradually people began to assemble. The custodian requested me to deliver a sermon, in response to which I began to relate the stories of Divine love on the part of eminent Sufi masters. Maulana Jan Mohammad interpreted me to the joyful admiration of the audience. When I recited the following two Persian verses, Maulana Jan

Mohammad started crying at a high pitch during the interpretation:

قال را بگزار مرد حال شو
پیش مرد کامل پامال شو
صد کتاب و صد ورق در نار کن
جان و دل را جانب دلدار کن

"Leave all idle talk and gain spiritual experience. Put yourself self-effacingly at the feet of an adept. Set hundreds of books and papers to fire. Turn your heart and soul to the Beloved.

Thereafter the Maulana burst into weeping beyond all control and I was unable to continue my sermon. The audience requested me to initiate them into the Naqshbandiah Order and I did so by administering the oath of repentance to all of them. When meditation and the praying process were over I met the locals who included a divine by the name of Haji Baba. When he and Taishah Baba saw each other they embraced weepingly. Later on I came to know that their friendship was rooted in their boyhood and they had met after sixty years. The sight of their illumined faces delighted us and only they knew what they were feeling in their hearts over this unexpected meeting after a yawning gap of time. "It is all due to the blessing of this Naqshbandi Shaykh that God

has not only brought us face to face but also made us fellow-disciples", said Haji Baba.

Youths of Iron Will

Maulana Abdullah introduced a young man to me, saying he was such a blessed soul that during the Communist rule he would publicly make five time prayer call and offer obligatory Prayers. I was surprised to hear it and wanted to know how it could happen. The young man lifted his shirt from the back and I saw that every inch of his back had scars. On my interrogation he said, "When I gave prayer call for the first time the police arrested me and gave me a severe beating. I pretended to be a madman. The more they beat me, the more I laughed. Several cops were tired out by beating me simultaneously but I felt no fatigue sustaining thrashing in the Name of Allah. I was even subjected to electric shocks but I endured them. I was laid on the snowy ground for hours. I was hung upside down night after night; my body was seared with hot iron and my nails were pulled out. But I made them feel as if I was a madman. I deliberately behaved like an insane person. The policemen kept thrashing me for a year and then sent me to madhouse. I passed a year there too till at least the doctor certified:

"This man is insane and mentally unfit. Yet he doesn' harm anybody. He simply remains self-absorbed. He therefore should not be rearrested."

I was set free thereafter. I demarcated a narrow space for doing worship. I would publicly make prayer call to be engaged at my devotions five times a day." When I heard his inspiring episode I kissed his forehead reciting the following verse:

اس قوم کو شمشیر کی حاجت نہیں رہتی
ہو جس کے جوانوں کی خودی صورت فولاد

"The nation whose young men are invested with a steel-like Ego hardly needs the sword."

Keeping in view life behind the erstwhile Iron Curtain, where people used to conceal their faith with a sense of fear, a God-devoted youth performing his devotions in public must have been looked on as an eyesore by the Kremlin. Viewing things from a Communist perspective one would think that such a committed soul would be put to death. But death cannot touch a man if it is the will of Allah to keep him alive. I looked at the young man again and again and took his steadfastness and preseverance with a sense of envy. No doubt some people are nobly born and they are unyielding to coercive forces, even at the risk of their life.

An Angelic Face

When I had met the common people a divine who was sitting in a corner rose to his feet and came forward to meet

me. His face was so overwhelmingly illumined by Divine lights that I spontaneously uttered the Qur'aanic words:

ما هذا بشرا ان هذا الا ملك كريم

"This is no mortal man. This is naught but a noble angel. (12.31)

Maulana Jan Mohammad introduced him to me saying, "Hazrat, he is a 93-year-old religious scholar of our area and he has devoted his entire life to imparting Qur'aanic teaching to children." "Even during the seven-decade-long Revolution?", I asked. Maulana Jan Mohammad smilingly said, "Yes, please. This is what is peculiar to him." When I sought elucidation the Maulana told me: "Hazrat, let you please yourself ask him." Responding to my question the blessed divine said, "I had built a double-walled room in my house and kept a space of about six or seven feet between the two walls. This space had been filled with soundproof material. I would take the students in the room and family members closed the door from outside with furniture etc. put against it. The whole winter season was spent by us in this way and all our requirements were met inside the room. Sometimes I couldn't afford to step in the courtyard of my house for four months at a stretch." On hearing this episode I remarked, "Your enthusiasm indeed did wonders." His eyes became tearful and he said, "I am extremely thankful to Allah that now I have been initiated into the Naqshbandiah Order through *bay'ah* (repentance or initiatory oath) at your hands.

God willing I hope, I shall be redeemed through you on the Day of Judgment." I said, "O yes, if Allah enquires of me on the last day what I have brought from the world, I will submit you to His Presence." My remarks made the audience weep spontaneously. The audience were weeping so bitterly that people from the outside could think perhaps we were mourning over somebody's death. Yet we were lamenting our religious insensitivity. At last we left for Taishah Baba's house and took rest after the evening (Isha) Prayer.

Homely Feast

Next day at 10 am we left for Masjid Abu Hafs Kabeer so as to meet friends who were to gather at the monastery. We found one Habibullah Jan of Bukhara standing on the way. He motioned us to stop the vehicle. First he shook hands with Taishah Baba and then he turned his face to me, insisting that I should alight from the vehicle and embrace him. I had to do so on his insistence. His family women, standing in the door away from us, were watching this scene. They sent a small girl with the word that the guest should be urged not to go without taking lunch to be hosted by them. Within minutes they slaughtered a goat. Maulana Jan Mohammad told me, "Hazrat, these women have put a feather in their cap." When asked to make himself clear he said, "It is a custom of Bukhara that when a householder slaughters an animal a guest comes under obligation not to leave without eating its

meat. Now come what may we are bound to stay at their house. I looked at Taishah Baba and he gave me a smile as if he meant that we had been outwitted by the women of their household. In the meantime they sent a child with the message that if the guests decided to stay with them, they would gladly slaughter an animal for their regalement everyday.

We had no other choice than to stay with Habibulah Jan. But what surprised us was the fact that within thirty or forty-five minutes the dishes of roasted and boiled meat were laid down before us. Out of surprise I asked the host how the meat was cooked so soon. He smilingly told me, "Please stay with me tonight. We shall slaughter another goat tomorrow and cook the meat in your presence so that you may see it with your own eyes." I told him, "Thanks very much. How can we fakirs accustomed to homely feasts assess the profound regard the Bukharans have in their heart for their guest?" I was reminded of the Prophetic saying:

من كان يؤمن بالله واليوم الآخر فليكرم ضيفه

"If a man believes in Allah and the hereafter he is supposed to be regardful of him."

English Girl's Quest for Peace

I offered my Zuhr (noon) Prayer in Masjid Abu Hafs Kabeer and the Imam Khateeb told me that an English girl

had come to see me during my absence yesterday. After a while a phone call came from Ghijdawan that an English girl had also gone there to see me. In the meantime a delegation of teachers belonging to Madresah Mir Arab came to see me. Giving the detail they said, "A group of Britons were on a visit to Samarkand and Bukhara and one of them, a young woman, reached the shrine of Shah Naqshband at Qasr-e-Arfan and put some questions to the Imam-Khateeb. Mentioning you to her he said that a Naqshbandi Shaykh from Pakistan who was currently on a visit to Bukhara could answer the rest of her questions. So the British girl travelled to Ghijdawan in search of you. She went to Masjid Abu Hafs Kabeer and Madresah Mir Arab too. She was disappointed when she got to know that I would leave Bukhara within 24 hours. She reportedly remarked that if only she had met me. Anyhow she would be staying today in the Tourist Hotel of Bukhara. If she came to know that you are present at this place she would eagerly reach here. Since you are scheduled to set out, we suggested that you stop on your way for a while and meet her. We feel that she is a seeker of truth."

I cut short the pulao party given to me by the masjid worshippers and took Maulana Abdullah along with me to the Tourist Hotel. On our inquiry the counter staff told us that they couldn't possibly locate any tourist without knowing his or her name as hundreds of tourists from different countries were staying in such a big hotel. I told them that a group of

tourists from England were staying in the hotel. After checking through her register the receptionist affirmed that they had gone sightseeing at a distance of fifty miles and left the keys with the counter staff. The disclosure made us heavy-hearted. Maulana Abdullah said to me, "Hazrat, since our itinerary will take us to Bistam and Kharqan too and certainly we would spend some time there, it would be apt to begin the journey." At least, I thought, I should set myself to bring the British girl within the focus of my spiritual attention. Hardly a few moments had passed when the receptionist called me with the gesture of her hand. When Maulana Abdullah went to the counter she told him, "A woman of the British group is present in the room and she has just talked to me by telephone. Should I ask her?" When contacted, it came out that she was the same girl. When I phoned her, she asked me if I would visit her in her room. I told her if she agreed to come down I would have a talk with her by sitting in the lounge.

Within a short while a girl wearing Arabic dress with a scarf over her head came down to me and wanted to know if I was Shaykh Zulfiqar Naqshbandi. When I replied in the affirmative she said that she had been frantically searching me for the last three days. I quoted to her an Arabic motto:

من جهد فوجد

"One who strives for an object seeks it out.

She was beside herself out of jubilation and said, "I deem it my good luck that I am talking to a saint of global stature." I asked her what she sought after. She said that she aimed at peace of mind. I told her that peace would follow only peace-oriented pursuits. She said to me, "You may have seen European society. I freely indulged in sensual pleasures. I gave myself to every carnal prompting but the result was psychic disquiet. Thereafter I went through a lot of books for peace of mind. I came to know that peace was deeply enshrined in the hearts of Sufi Masters of Islam and I delved into their invocatory methods. Loud *dhikr* hardly chimed with my environment. I however took the Naqshbandiah way of *dhikr*. And I practise it. I asked her, "Do you practise meditation?" She replied in the affirmative. For how long do you continue the meditation daily was my next question to which she replied, "I do it several times. If I take them in totality the duration will come to about three hours." I was surprised to hear it. She said, "I also understand the technical terms such as Loneliness in the Public, Heedfulness of Steps, Journey Homeward and Conscious Breathing. Yet I would like to request you to further elucidate to me the technical terms of Awareness of the Heart, Awareness of Number and Awareness of Time as used by Shah-e-Naqshband. I was surprised to hear such utterances of an English girl. To be sure, it was a quest in the true sense. However I explained to her everything in detail. For about two hours she kept

narrating her life story to me and putting questions about that of mine. She told me, "Today I have achieved the object of my visit to Bukhara. I want to remain in touch with you on a permanent basis." We exchanged addresses. As we were already late we rushed to the vehicle. She followed us and then went away salaaming us with the bow of her head.

Khawjah Bayazid Bistami رحمه الله

Khawjah Bayazid Bistami was a towering Sufi master of the Naqshbandiah Order. Junayd Baghdadi is reported to have said about him: *"Bayazid has the same rank among the Friends of God as Gabriel has among angels.*

While going from Bukhara to Samarkand one comes across a place by the name of Karan Tappah. This town has big graveyard where the holy shrine of Abu Yazid Bistami رحمه الله stands on a mound. On our arrival there we put up two cycles of Prayer in the mosque and entered into contemplation after sending up prayers to his soul. There was silence and loneliness with the perceptible inflow of Divine grace.

On being free form the contemplation we started off. The graveyard gate is made of wood which is so richly engraved that it captivates human eyes. Strangely, a rite germane to graveyards here was initiated by the Communists and the Muslims adopted it too. The name of the deceased is inscribed on every gravestone with his image so skilfully

engraved that you would think his photograph has been stuck on it by somebody. Inviting their attention to it I told the ulema to instruct the masses to shun this anti-shariah practice. But I was told by a person that it was unavoidable under the instructions of the local administration. I thought the Communist rulers might have enforced this rule on account of their hostility towards Islam.

Lingering Memory

When we left Bistam for Kharqan Maulana Abdullah reminded me, "Hazrat, we had promised Abdul Wahid, the muezzin of the Shah-e-Naqshband Masjid, that before leaving Bukhara for Samarkand we would stay with him for a while and take tea." I was neither habitual of taking tea nor did I want to stop but the Divine injunction-"Fulfill your promise"-made me halt. We reached the Kakan village where Abdul Wahid lived. There was an enclosure in which stood about ten homes. The rural atmosphere here is much similar to that of our country. Yet certain points of difference are noticeable. First, all rural people of Central Asia, including men, women and children, are literate. If you see a tractor-man engaged in his ploughing job and ask him about the location of some place, he will instantly take a pen and piece of paper from his pocket and sketch out the required address for your convenience. Under the law of the land an eight-year old child is bound to take admission to a five-year course. If the

parents fail to do this they are sent to jail. The boys undergo a compulsory military training for two years thereafter. However they can decide about their further education at will. Small surprise, even a shepherd is not illiterate.

Its another distinctive mark is that one finds here water-supply, electricity and metalled roads, even in the full range of a village. Telephone facility is available everywhere. When we reached the home of Abdul Wahid, we met there two visitors with Sufi bent of mind. The elderly one divulged to us that he was a deputy of a certain Naqshbandi Shaykh. Auspiciously enough, a recurrent feature of the younger one's dreams was the blessed sight of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). Maulana Abdullah related to them the exhilarative occurrences at Bukhara and Ghijdawan and faith-boosting account of Taishah Baba's discipleship. This gave an impulse to both the persons to join the Naqshbandiah Order. After taking tea I administered to them the initiatory oath and conducted meditation. I also gave my sanction for instituting the Khatam Khawajgan (traditional Naqshbandiah practice of uttering the specific Divine Names) at the local masjid. On our departure Abdul Wahid, overpowered by emotions, started kissing me profusely. This has kept the memory of his love and devotion lingering instead of his tea-party.

Abu-al-Hasan Kharqani رحمه الله

On our way to Kharqan from Bistam I was engrossed in my thoughts when one tyre of our car was punctured. We got down from the vehicle and saw that another tyre was unsustainable too. It was decided in consultation with Maulana Abdullah that the driver should be sent back to Bukhara. Relying on providential help we made up our mind to go by bus or taxi. We had hardly waited for three minutes on the roadside that a car stopped. It was being driven by a young man with a lady sitting behind. The driver asked Maulana Abdullah why we were standing. He was told that we wanted to go to Kharqan and were awaiting a taxi. A taxi, he said, won't be available on the highway. The lady proposed to the man to give us a lift. She came to the front seat and we were asked to occupy the back seat. Deeming this gesture a divine help we put our luggage in the vehicle and took the back seat. When it drove off we came to know that the driver was indeed some civilian high-up and husband of the lady. He belonged to the Nawa'i city which was named after Uzbekistan's famous poet Ali Shair Nawa'i. We thought that some part of the journey would be covered comfortably and after that God would Himself take care of us. On arrival at his native city the young man invited us to his home, saying that his father would be glad to meet us. When we reached his home we found his father really a gentle soul with special affinity for men of God. He entertained us with tea

and insisted on taking lunch before leaving. We offered our excuse on account of the journey but he said, "We shall take you to Kharqan in our vehicle and come back within two hours. Meanwhile the meal will be ready."

When we reached Kharqan it came to our knowledge that its graveyard was situated on the bank of a big canal. A crop had been grown in the graveyard. The tomb of the great saint stood near a masjid which was built inside a garden, and the length of the grave was about ten meters. We sent up prayers to his soul and then sat inmeditation. The atmosphere was impressively peaceful. I got back to the days when powerful rulers like Mahmud of Ghazna would visit this saint and sit at his feet. I related to my companions some inspiring incidents of his life. We took our lunch at Nawa'i and went to Samarkand by a taxi.

Journey towards Arghat

When I left for Arghat in the morning, Maulana Abdullah, Hazrat Gul Baba of Ghijdawan and Khuda-i-Burdhah, Imam of Masiid Bukhari were my fellow-travellers. This city situated in a mountainous valley at a distance of 40 kilometers from Samarkand is known for its flourishing steel industry. Verdancy is another distinctive feature of this place. An hour's journey took us to Kanglak, a locality which just lies at the foothill. The house where we put up had a glass-balcony presenting a complete view of the surrounding. I was



asked to stay in this balcony. Greenery, flowers and the snow-capped hills rose in my looking-range on all sides. Interestingly, the roses were like a big-sized cup. Tradition says that the Holy Prophet ﷺ would like the rose-scent and Sunnah alone motivated Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nan(…) رحمه الله (founder of the famous Deoband seminary) to like it well. Carried by a sense of devotional value I kept lookin(…) the flowers too. Strangely enough, I also found the growt(…) small sweet-smelling flowers on the wild grass here. T(…) sight of the multi-coloured flowers was so attractive that I di(…) not wish to shift my focus from them. I felt that greenery had a special relevance to this place. The dried fruit which I was offered included big-sized delicious almonds and walnuts. And the water was also so cool and tasty that one would like to go on drinking it. Indeed this place was an earthly paradise in a unique way.

Our host had invited ulema and pious men from the neighbouring *basti* (locality). After the *Zuhr* (noon) Prayer I gave a talk and Maulana Abdullah did the interpreting job. At about 3 pm the host said that the vehicle was ready to carry me to a nearby hill and on return we would offer the *Asr* (mid-afternoon) Prayer in the central mosque of Arghat. It was a very pleasant journey. Passing through the spreading water of cascades and winding paths the vehicle came to a halt at a place where stood the shrine of a certain saint. We got down and sent up prayers to benefit his soul. The

atmosphere was so calm and serene that it automatically induced one to go into meditation. Here I instructed Hazrat Gu' Baba in *Muraqbah Ma'yyat* (Meditation of Companionship). He had already taken lessons of *Masharbat* from another Shaykh. I started his lessons from *latifah-e-qalb* (Subtle-point of Heart) and made him spend much time on "nafi-athbat" (negation and affirmation) and then mean the utterance, "There is no deity but God." Though he was an old man, he sustained the strenuous exercise and also digested my captiousness. He instantly apologized for any lapses of etiquette and repeatedly wept and said that only if he had attended such soul-boosting meetings in his youth. Once I got angry with him for certain reason but he moved forward and embraced me. He lavished kisses on my cheeks and forehead and tried to conciliate me, saying that he had made a mistake due to the language problem. Under the impact of his sincerity prayers came gushing out of my heart for him. In view of Maulana Abdullah's young age I was working up his lata'if in a low-key way. But his passion for service was tremendous. During this Arghat journey Maulana Abdullah discarded the Uzbek cap and instead started wearing a turban. I was overjoyed at his observance of Sunnah.

We offered *Asr* Prayer in the central mosque of Arghat. Thereafter I delivered a sermon which was interpreted by Maulana Abdullah. The Imam Masjid was the first of the audience to offer himself for discipleship. The rest of them

took sentiment from his example and lined up to express their initiatory pledge too. This devotional fervour continued till *Isha* (evening) Prayer. In the end we came back to the residence of the host for nocturnal rest.

Journey towards Sabz City

On 2 June 1992 we set off on a journey towards Sa City. A mountain lies between Samarkand and Sabz City. I tunnel is dug into it, the distance between the two cities wil probably be covered by minutes. But due to the mountain the travel takes hours. The mountain is all green and the name of the city, Sabz (green) itself symbolizes greenery. I have never seen such an exuberant greenery in any city of the world. The grass seems to be growing from beneath the roads, so much so that at some places it sprouts forth from the concrete floor. Amir Timur was born in this territory. During this mountainous journey we came across winding paths with green trees and green mountains. What gave us further joy was an extremely pleasant weather added by the sight of most beautiful people and the wide city roads having gardens on both sides.

Maulana Abdullah kept talking with the taxi driver all along. When we reached the city the driver asked us, "Do you have any acquaintance in the city?" We said, "No." Then he wanted to know the purpose of our visit. We told him that we wanted to visit the shrines of the elect of God and send up

prayers for the peace of their souls. He said to us, "Then first accompany me to my home and have lunch. Thereafter I will drop you at any point of your choice." Accordingly, our afternoon stay was at his house. We offered our *Asr* Prayer in the nearby mosque. In the wake of the discourse which I made there many worshippers, including the Imam Masjid, took an initiatory oath at my hands. Many of them displayed their keen interest in playing hosts to us but we told them that we were guests of such-and-such person. Thereupon they approached and entreated him to surrender in their favour. The driver's wife remarked she never knew the guests were so respectable that many people would anxiously want them to be their guests. When after taking breakfast next morning we set off to visit the shrines of Sabz City, 17 locals were also with us. An Urdu poet has beautifully depicted a situation like ours:

میں اکیلا ہی چلا تھا جانب منزل
لوگ ساتھ آتے گئے اور کارواں بنتا گیا

"I was all alone when I had proceeded to my destination. People kept joining me, shaping up a caravan.

Angels, not Humans

On June 3 we drove from Sabz City into Qarshi. Here we came to know that still the mosques of the city had not

been reopened for individual or collective Prayer, and therefore people individually said Prayers at home. A young man saw us and said, "Let me show you the mosque." He led us to Masjid Bilal. Area-wise it was wide and spacious but its structure was in a dilapidated condition. We were happy to see that forty young boys worshipped in this mosque and a 13-year-old boy, namely Arif Behram, led them in Prayer. After *Maghrab* Prayer (sunset Prayer) I delivered a sermon and all the boys accepted my discipleship. When they went home and recounted to their mothers what they had observed in the mosque, the women also reached there to listen to me. So after *Isha* Prayer I delivered a sermon to them. In the end I took a pledge from them to practise the shariah and conducted a meditative sitting.

Our night stay was in the house of an Arab youth. The female inmates of the house could not sleep the whole night under the thrill of happiness. Before Fajr (morning) Prayer 15 children came to take me to Bilal Masjid where I spent my time in their company up to *Zuhr* (noon) Prayer. I instructed them in rituals and formulas related to the performance of Prayer. I also inaugurated an assembly of *dhikr* and *Khatm-e-Khawajgan* and Arif Behram was appointed its chief. When the children put on kerchief-turbans they wore such an angelic look as if they had descended from the sky. I spontaneously remarked, "The '*arshi*' celestial dwellers have

glided down to Qarshi." Maulana Abdullah was rejoiced to hear it.

Departure for Jazak

On the Friday of 5 June 1992 we reached the central mosque of Jazak. The Khateeb had already started delivering his sermon. When we entered the mosque the sitting worshippers began to give way to us till we went up to the first row. As soon as the Khateeb caught sight of my face he wound up his discourse there and then and without any formal introduction he said, "The rest of the sermon will be preached by our guest Shaykh." Accordingly, I started the discourse and finished it in time. One of the worshippers stood up and told me to carry on my discourse because the audience were enjoying it. Consequently I had to dilate on it. When the Prayer was over many people came into the fold of the Naqshbandiah Order.

When we sat at the table for eating I noticed that the small madresah students were laying the table in a decent way. I was filled with joy to see that they had been groomed in a good way. The Khateeb called a small boy by the name of 'Mullah Abdul Ghafoor' and he came running. That was something new for me. I asked the Khateeb as to why he had called him as mullah. He told me that the accursed Communists had tried to damage the religion in every possible way. What was worse, he said, the titles which were earlier symbolic of respect and nobility took a derogatory and

ignoble turn at their hands. Their vicious aim was to estrange people from such names. They would, for example, apply the epithet of mullah to such a man who was senseless or lunatic. To counter this, thereby correcting people's vision, we consider for this excellence only that boy who is best of all in matter of performance and intelligence. As a result of it, every student aspires to be addressed as mullah. I was overjoyed to hear this.

Meeting with a Muslim

After the lunch I was introduced to a religious scholar who was in charge of the Imams and Khateebs of 6000 mosques. He greeted me warmly, saying, "You have awakened our inner eye. Indeed we badly need such moral doses. If you can afford the time, your programmes can be arranged in the main mosque in and around Jazak." I told him, "May I know your good name?" He relied that Musalmaan was his name. I said, "We are all Muslims." He told me his name was also Musalmaan. I remarked, "Should I say that you are a Musalmaan by name." At this audience burst into laughter.

I told the audience, "To give an example, all people are the slaves of Allah but some are named 'Abdullah' (The slave of Allah). Similarly, the communities of all Prophets (peace be upon them) lived by Islam, but Islam was the name given

to the Muhammadan Ummah by Allah.. It is for this reason that we pray:

رضينا بالله ربا و محمد نبيا وبالاسلام دينا

"We became happy with Allah for being our Sustainer, with Muhammad for being our Prophet and with Islam for being our religion."

We spent night at the madresah.

Test of Genuineness

Next morning the Khateeb told me, "The city has two principal mosques. The one is the same where you delivered the Friday sermon and the second lies in the nearby locality where you are supposed to go. I wanted to know the reason for this urgency. He told me, "The Khateeb of that mosque has friendly terms with Saudi ulema, hence he views all those connected with Sufi path (Tasawwuf) as misled, apostate and polytheist. We have amiably tried to persuade him to be open to reason but all in vain. We fear if this individual example of non-conformism also catches fancy of the masses, our society will become rife with mutual wrangles and disputes." I told him that I won't hesitate to oblige him. He gave a ring to that Khateeb and said, "A Shaykh has come from Pakistan and benefited the locals a lot. I wish that he should also deliver a sermon in your mosque." The Khateeb agreed to that. The mosque was full of worshippers when I reached there for the

noon Prayer along with many friends. I met Imam Uthman Khan. His elder son seemed somewhat unwelcoming as if he was looking at somebody suspiciously. After the Prayer Uthman Khan chose him for interpretation. I discoursed on the subject of purification of Heart and soul. When I started quoting from the Holy Qur'aan passages after passages to bear out my argument the audience was enraptured. Yet the facial expressions of the interpreter betrayed ill feeling and unkindness. When I spoke for ten minutes, he summarized my utterances within two minutes. Meanwhile, Maulana Abdullah sensed the whole situation. He stood up and approached the young man and told him, "You please sit down and let me interpret the rest of the discourse." Thank God, the Maulana did a superb interpretation to my delight. After the discourse and meditation I wound up with prayer. Maulana Abdullah whispered to me if he should ask the audience for the initiatory pledge. I told him to leave the matter because the Khateeb would oppose it. I have a genuine commodity and they will come to know themselves. The Maulana began to give account of what he saw and observed during the journey. When the audience came to know that the outstanding ulema and Shaykhs of Samarkand, Bukhara, Namanghan and Marghlan had made a pledge of discipleship at my hands, they expressed the desire for the *bay'ah* too. As the cloth was spread for *bay'ah* the Khateeb and his son also took it and pronounced the initiatory litany. After the *bay'ah* I

put my finger on their heart and gave it a stroke with the pronouncement of Allah's Name and said, "It is a Divine blessing. Have its taste. A shopkeeper who has pure commodity lets the customer sample its relish. No proof is more convincing than experience." Some of the audience insisted that, "You should be our guest today." When the Khateeb saw that I had won over the hearts of the worshippers, he said, "No, he will be my guest." I agreed and reached his home. There was an arrangement for a rich feast. A lavish provision of things and princely ways betrayed an abundance of wealth. During the meal the Khateeb spoke out himself about Saudi connection. Then he asked me: "What do you think about the pronouncement of the recurrent formula of 'O' Shaykh'?" Discussing in detail I told him that it was not fair to refute all Shaykhs on the basis of what ignorant Sufi said or believed. The grave mistake of Saudi ulema is that by relying on the rapturous utterances of some Sufi masters they had taken Tasawwuf (Sufism) as anti-Islam, whereas it is synonymous with "Ihsan" (excellence or supreme good). It is up to ulema to distinguish between true and untrue. Thank God, Imam Uthman's mind was so cleared that he learnt from me the method of performing meditation and promised that he would henceforward desist from opposing all Sufis except the ignorant ones. I told him that the relentless opponent of ignorant Sufis was Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Thani and I followed the line of his thought and practice.

When I quoted some passages from the epistles of the great Mujaddid the Imam said, “Hazrat, your arrival has come out as a blessing for us, otherwise we would have wandered away from our spiritual roots.”

Next day we were invited to breakfast at the house of a local Imam Masjid whose son was the class-fellow of Kamaluddin and pupil of Daud Khan of Namanghan. Meanwhile, Imam Uthman Khan also reached there. I began to discourse on the subject of God’s Oneness and tears trickled down from the Imam’s eyes. Thereafter Uthman khan gave me his address, saying, “Hazrat, I want to remain in touch with you. Please count me as your pupil.” The audience was overjoyed to hear this.

On this occasion two bothers, Saeed Akbar and Saeed Abbas, took oath of discipleship at my hands. It may be mentioned here that they are the descendants of Makhdoom Azamرحمة الله عليه, a famous spiritual luminary of the area. To revert to our point, Saeed Akbar, the elder one, was a Sufi and dervish-type of man and popular with the masses. They invited me to dinner and I accepted the offer.

I put up the Morning Prayer at Masjid Kalan and then made a discourse on the subject of God-consciousness. The Imam-Khateeb, the deputy Imam and a good number of worshippers joined the fold of the Order. After the evening Prayer I delivered a sermon in the courtyard of a big under-construction mosque where a large number of young students

had thronged. That was the result of the effort which had been made by Maulana Saeed Azam, a teacher of Madresah Mir Arab. It was he who interpreted my discourse and again it was he who took initiative for the *bay'ah*. That precipitated the whole gathering into joining the Order. Thankfully, the Divine hand helped in promoting the cause of the Order.

Next day we left here and reached the Tourism Hotel of Tashkent. Mr Yaqoob Tabani said to me, "Hazrat, we have already heard of the whole story of your travel. Please write down your travelogue to benefit other people." I replied him in the affirmative. When I met with Abbas Khan, he said to me, "Everybody has received reports about you. The staffers of a newspaper are constantly contacting us in order to know our impressions and observations. This will be beneficial to common people. You must accompany me tomorrow and do this task, please."

Interview with a Newspaper

On 8th June 1992 Mr. Akbar Khan took me to a newspaper office where the full editorial staff were present. The dialogue continued for nearly an hour. Next week the newspaper's two million copies were printed with the interview spread over the half of its front page. Consequently people kept mentioning this newspaper interview during all

the subsequent travels. People and ulema of distant places came to the cities and took oath of discipleship at my hands.

Interview with Tashkent Radio

On 16 June 1992 Mr. Abbas Khan took me to the central office of Tashkent Radio where I met with Mr. Hasham khan of the Urdu section. He requested me to record my Qur'aan recitation which, he said, would permanently prologue the Urdu programme of Tashkent Radio. Accordingly, I recorded my recitation of some Surahs. I also had written two articles. One was captioned "Literary Stars of Uzbekistan" which presented an interesting collection of biographic events and situations of Uzbek ulema and pious men. Mr. Hasham Khan sprang up to read this and said, "You write so well. We will not let you go from here." The other article, captioned as "Seek Peace of Mind", described in detail as to how one got peace of mind by the remembrance of Allah.

On return Abbas Khan told me, "I took you to be an engineer-Shaykh. But I have come to know today that you are also a litterateur." I said to him, "Brother,

I am wandering from door to door only to learn courtesy. But it is not the poetic

(or literary) courtesy, rather it is the courtesy (of the Heart) for which goes the prophetic saying

الدين كله ادب

"The Religion is out and out courtesy."

A gnostic has said:

ادبو النفس ايها الاصحاب
طرق العشق كلها آداب

"O friends, discipline your sensual soul to good manners (because) the ways of the self-surrendering love are entirely good manners.

JOURNEY TO TAJIKISTAN

On 20 June 1992 Maulana Abdullah and Abu Uthman came to me in the Tourism Hotel. Abu Uthman asked me, "Hazrat, do you have any problem regarding meals etc?" I replied, "Not at all. Rather Allah is providing me sumptuous and square food, beyond what I deserve." He asked me, "Do you have to go down to eat meal in the restaurant?" I replied, "No, it is brought up to me in the room." Abu Uthman gave me a look of surprise. Meanwhile, someone knocked at the door. He opened the door to see that a Russian maid was standing carrying a tray of hot food. She made salaam to me and asked if she should lay the table. On getting my nod she put the food and the drinking water on the table and asked me when she should come to take the empty vessels. I told her that she should come within half an hour. When that maid went away Abu Uthman told me, "Hazrat, I and Maulana Abdullah were thinking that you would be faced

here with meal problem. But now we have seen with our own eyes that God accords you royal dignity every where." I told them, "Please come and have meal." After eating lunch we took a brief siesta and then reached the railway station at four o' clock. Dr. Mansoor had taken us in his car. We discovered that the ticket showed the Moscow time and since the Uzbekistan time was one hour behind it, we would have to wait for one hour. We alighted from the car and stood nearby. Soon people began to gather around me to shake hands with me and seek my prayers.

All of a sudden a voice came from a direction, "How do you do brother Zulfiqar?" I turned about and saw that an Engineering University classfellow was standing there. I met him and during conversation he told me that he was working as an engineer in the Chakwal district (Pakistan). Presently he was on a preaching trip and going to Dushanbe along with his group. He asked me, "What brings you here?' I told him that I intended to go to Dushanbe. "Have you come alone from Pakistan?", he questioned. I told him: "Apparently, I am alone but in reality God is with me." On seeing Maulana Abdullah and Abu Uthman he asked me who they were. When I told him that they were my fellow-travellers, he asked me if I paid them for giving me their company. I put the same question to him whether his fellow-travellers were paid by him. He replied, "We travel in the way of Allah." I told him, "Do you think that we tread the path of Saṭan?" He said to

me, "We are going to call people to Allah. And you are perhaps on a visit to Russia." I told him, "Remove your misunderstanding, please. It is not necessary that eight or less people should make a group. Sometimes even a single person is equal to a group. As the Qur'aan says, ان ابراهیم کان امة "Verily Abraham (peace be upon him) was an Ummah." He asked me, "What do you do here?" I said, "I invoke the Name of Allah as well as cause others to do so." After keeping silent for a little while he told me that I should travel with his group. I said to him, "God willing, we shall remain in touch with each other because we shall be travelling by the same train for 20 hours. He told me, "Please tell me if I need anything." I replied, "God alone meets human requirements. He is with us for all the time, He never sleeps neither He doses off nor He gets tired." He smiled to hear this and said, "You would also talk in a meaningful way during the Varsity days." I told him, "Should I talk nonsense?" He took leave of me by the utterance of salaam.

Dushanbe Journey

The rail travel in Central Asian States is considered to be safe and comfortable. A railway carriage has neat and clean coupes with comfortable seats. Each coupe has sitting and sleeping space for four people with a supervisor deputed over a few coupes. The railway carriage has a spacious dining-car providing with the facility of eatables and drinks.

When we mounted the train, there were three seats for us and the fourth seat was occupied by a scantily-clad Russian girl. Soon she felt that the place was ill-suited for her. She went to an adjoining coupe and exchanged her seat with a man and on our side we felt comfortable too.

The bogies of the rail carriage are so joined to each other that one can go up to the last end by remaining inside. We were talking about the Prayer timings that in the meantime two young men entered our coupe. When Maulana Abdullah saw them he sprang up and warmly embraced them. Introducing them to me he said that they were students of Tashkent-based Madresah Talah Shaikh. The students said. "We are about 50 students. We are on annual vacation from today and are going to Dushanbe. The students want to see you." I said, "Very well, our journey will pass enjoyably. But you should come in groups of six/seven person each so that you may sit in the coupe conveniently." Thereafter the students started coming in groups. I started the process of sermonising and discoursing. Meanwhile my classfellow burst upon the scene too. He was surprised to see the fully-packed coupe. I made him sit beside me. He kept listening to my sermon, noting the facial expressions of the audience. When the sermon was finished the students expressed the desire for taking the oath of discipleship at my hands. Accordingly 1 obliged them. Then came the second group. After a brief discourse I brought them to the fold of the

Order. Things continued till late at night and my classfellow told me that he had no idea that my fans so rapturously cringed before me. I told him, "The object of our pursuit is the same, only there are two different ways of working for the religion and both are right. We should work for the religion by maintaining our relationship of mutual love and good feeling." He told me that the members of his group were also eager to see me. "It would be a great blessing for me", I replied. So his group-fellows came and we took meal together.

Throughout the journey we offered Prayers in congregation. Apparently the journey was arduous and discomforting but God made it a pleasant and successful one. At last the 20-hour Journey came to an end. We dismounted from the train, hired a taxi and set off towards Shehr Nao.

Three Brothers

Three young brothers of Shehr Nao, namely Habibullah, Mohibullah and Motee'ullah, had taken the initiatory oath at my hands in the house of Taishah Baba in Bukhara and invited me to visit Dushanbe. I accepted their invitation but without giving a date. I was going to their home to fulfill this promise. The surrounding hilly area was fascinating. Greenery was all around. The houses were spacious with each courtyard having garden. Grapevines had crept up the walls and one thought as if they had been stuck by human hand.

The water of snowy cascades streamed through the compounds of the houses in the form of small rivulets. The life of the locals seemed to be comparatively peaceful, shorn of the hurry of the Western world.

When the vehicle stopped in front of a house-gate Maulana Abdullah knocked at it. Habibullah opened the door and on finding us before his eyes he raised a loud cry of "God is Great" On hearing his loud voice the other two brothers also hurriedly came up. The women of the house were viewing this scene from a distance. I asked the three brothers if they had received a telegraphic message about our arrival. They replied in the negative. I tendered my apology to them for having arrived unexpectedly to their embarrassment. Habibullah said, "Please first come in and then we shall talk about it."

Clairvoyance of a Believer

When we entered the house, three beds were laid in a room and three plates were lying on the tablecloth. The room was neat and clean as if it had been decorated for some guests. As soon as we sat down, hot meal was laid on the tablecloth. When I curiously wanted to know about all this, Habibullah said that a God-oriented man lived at some distance from here. A few days ago we went to see him and he told us that on such and such day three guests would come to our house and one of them would be a Naqshbandi Shaykh.

We should give them full respect and also inform him about their arrival so that he may come to pay his compliments to the Shaykh as well, he said. Today was the same day as predicted by him. "We the three brothers have taken leave from office, otherwise we are hardly available at home in daytime. Thank God, you are seeing that three beds are laid and meal is prepared. Kindly start eating. Indeed Divine blessing is descending upon our home", Habibullah said.

After having meal we went to deep sleep. On waking up we put up our noon Prayer and then had tea. I told Habibullah that since I had happened to visit Tajikistan for the fist time he should give me some information about it.

A Beautiful Country

Habibullah said that the northern region of Tajikistan, prior to the Communist Revolution, had been under the sway of Russian Czar since 1868, whereas the southern region was part of the State of Amir Bukhara. Several years after the Revolution this territory had been part of Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan till Stalin formed the Tajikistan Republic in 1929. Marking out its frontiers he so manoeuvred that the half of the Tajik territory, including Samarkand and Bukhara, was made part of Uzbekistan and the rest of the territory was converted into a new republic. Accordingly, there are eight million Tajiks in Uzbekistan, whereas Tajikistan has one million Uzbeks.

The total area of Tajikistan Republic is only one lakh and forty-three thousand square miles. But it has a strategic significance. Uzbekistan faces its west, Kirghizstan north, China east and Afghanistan south, where a thin strip of Wakhan separates Tajikistan from Pakistan. Tajikistan is a beautiful country of beautiful mountains. Its people are also unequalled in their good looks. Their language is Persian, that is, Tajiki. The population of Tajikistan is about 33 lakh with 17 lakh being Tajiks and the rest are Uzbek, Russian, Tatars and other people.

In response to my inquiry about Dushanbe, Habibullah told me that Dushanbe is the name of a river of Hisar Valley. Once a small town by name of Dushanbe stood on its bank but after the formation of a republic it spread into a city. In the intervening period it was named as Stalin but again it was named as Dushanbe. The whole city makes a circuit of a big road which is called as Khayaban-e-Rodki.

In the meantime visitors from a neighbouring locality started trickling in and we got engaged in conversation with them. After the sunset Prayer I delivered a sermon in the mosque and the audience came into the fold of Naqshbandiah Order. When we reached home the household females wanted me to make a discourse. I got through sermonizing, meditation and the *bay'ah* process at midnight till I was overpowered by deep sleep.

Maulana Yaqub Charkhi ؒ

It was on Monday that I, accompanied by Mohibullah, went to Dushanbe and visited the tomb of venerable Maulana Mohammad Yaqub Charkhi ؒ. So many people from Afghanistan had accepted his discipleship that they took upon themselves to give service to his monastery, and they continue to shoulder this responsibility even today. Apart from being an erudite scholar he was also an ardent and adept Sufi. Maulana Yaqub Charkhi had also set about writing an exegesis of the Holy Qur'aan but he died before he could complete it. When after sending up prayers to the benefit of his soul we entered the mosque, I saw that my classfellow, along with his fellow-preachers, was already present there. We happily met with one another. My classfellow told me, "When you left Tashkent, you had only two companions." I replied in the affirmative. Then he said, "And now you are about twenty people. Are these locals previous acquaintances or new ones?" I replied," They have entered the fold of the Order after our arrival here. They are giving us company out of love." He told me, "We the eight men worked for all the day yesterday and won over only four people. Whereas you are walking about along with twenty new recruits." I quoted a Persian verse:

ایں سعادت بزور بازو نیست
تا نہ بخشد خدائے بخشندہ

such a blessing was not the result of someone's personal effort, rather it was a sheer grace of Allah.

Meanwhile, the muezzin came to me and said that I would be leading the Friday Prayer in this mosque where a large number of worshippers came. I told him that I would comply with his request. My classfellow told me that he and his fellow-travelers would offer the Friday Prayer in another mosque and therefore he requested me to make a discourse to them. I briefly lectured on the subject of knowledge and Allah's remembrance. Mohibullah intermittently glanced at me and at his watch. It was a clear hint that another place awaited our visit and we had run short of time. Accordingly, I lifted my hands for a farewell prayer. To be sure, a global effort for the guidance of humanity is like Noah's ark. Anyone who is engaged in this effort will enter the domain of peace.

Khawjah Makhdoom Azam رحمه الله

After leaving Dushanbe we reached the Hisar Valley. This vast expanse of land encircled by mountains on all sides was once called the Hisar Kingdom. A certain king also built here a royal fort with a beautiful garden adjacent to it. Now all these buildings have been reduced to ruins.

Close to the ruins stands the tomb of Khawjah Makhdoom Azam رحمه الله. This sharp contrast gave me a

pleasant surprise. I thought the royal household would be disciples of Makhdoom Azam and in view of this tutelary relevance they would have built his tomb near the royal palaces.

Divine Protection

A town of Shehar Nao, Tabash, symbolized a sign of warning for people. Its dwellers had turned Communists and touched the lowest ebb in pursuit of wicked and immoral deeds. Mohibullah told me that the Tabash people were fast asleep one night that all of a sudden an earthquake took place. People woke up and came out in the courtyards of their houses. The tremor ceased after a while and people got back to their rooms and went to sleep. Yet it again came rattling with such intensity that the whole town was reduced to a pile of rubble and all the people were killed except a suckling. It is truly said that death cannot touch a soul before the destined hour. I told Mohibullah according to the Sunnah that one should, seeking God's forgiveness, hurriedly pass by a place which has witnessed the visitation of His punishment. So we wasted no moment to speed up our vehicles. That place was so dreadful and awe-inspiring that we remained under its impact for three days. Even today when the scene of the devastated town passes before my eyes, I feel the cold shivers in my body and the following Qur'aanic verse imperceptibly comes on my tongue:

فكاين من قرية اهلكنها و هى خاوية على عروشها و بئر معطلة و قصر مشيد

"And how many a township have We destroyed because it had been immersed in evildoing and now they (all) lie deserted, with their roofs caved in! And how many a well lies abandoned and how many a cattle that (once) stood high!" (22:45)

God-Oriented Masons

On June 23 we visited a graveyard, which was about 40 kilometers away from Shehar Nao, studded with the mausoleum of a great Shaykh of the Naqshbandiah Order. His name was Arif (gnostic) that was in essence identical with the named. The government had preserved his mausoleum under archaeological heritage. The specialty of this building was that it had been made of bricks and its construction was uniquely beautiful. When I closely looked at the walls I saw that the bricks had been laid in such an order that a few bricks joined together made the Name of "Allah." Glory be to Allah! So adept were our Sufi masters that the love of Allah even pervaded the hearts of those masons who remained in their service, and when they built a wall the Name of Allah took its shape from the bricks which were joined together. As says an Urdu poet:

میں نے تو یونہی خاک میں پھیری تھیں انگلیاں
دیکھا جو غور سے تری تصویر بن گئی

"I had only casually pushed my fingers through the dust. When I looked closely, thy image had been made in it"

On some places the image of the heart had been made out of bricks with the Name of Allah being carved in it. Strange were these devoted, passionate souls that during the process of using bricks and mortar they would inscribe the Name of Allah in the walls.

Masjid Arif Riugari

After visiting the mausoleum we offered our noon Prayer in the chief mosque of the neighbouring town of Riugar. I delivered a sermon at the request of the Imam and later a huge audience joined the Order. The locals visibly came under the spell of the invocation of Allah's Name. Here a man who would perennially fast also became my disciple. I advised him to practise a specific order (Saum-i-Daudi) with regard to fasting. The display of enthusiasm by the young man was worth seeing. We took meal after the lecture. Thereafter a local man of God Hazrat Aishan Baba took the initiatory oath at my hands. He told me that he had taken lessons up to the Companionship Meditation (*Muraqbah Mayyat*) from his Shaykh and now I should give him

advanced lessons. I told him, "The job of a messenger is to deliver the post, otherwise I do not even deserve sitting in your company." This made Aishan Baba weep and the audience burst into tears too. And according to a Punjabi poet, perpetual sobbing and tear shedding fall to the lot of one who embarks on treading the hazardous spiritual path. This is, so to speak, unavoidable and indispensable to receiving Divine Grace.

Meeting with Amir Shakoor

On being free from engagements in Riugar Mohibullah took us to the house of a duke who had invited us to dinner as well as the local ulema along with a select gathering. I may tell the reader that I was disinterested in the feast yet more keen to meet with the local religious establishment. After reaching there we took a little rest and then offered the Asr Prayer.

Later I started quoting the sayings of Sufi masters and meanwhile a gentleman came playing the tambourine and began to recite a lyric of lqbal:

دل مردہ دل نہیں ہے اسے زندہ کر دوبارہ
کہ یہی ہے امتوں کے مرض کہن کا چارہ

"A dead heart is no heart, reanimate it. Because this is the only remedy for nations' chronic illness."

The voice was surprisingly bewitching. Dead silence prevailed over the audience. I realized that the people of this region liked Iqbal's poetry like anything. When Amir Shakoor finished singing the lyric he looked at me and recited the following:

غزل اس نے چھیڑی مجھے ساز دینا
ذرا عمر رفتہ کو آواز دینا

"He touched off the singing of a lyric, please give me the musical instrument. Just call back the days which are gone"

I said, "Amir Shakoor! You have been under the spell of lyrics merely on the external plane up to this day. Let me touch the strings of your heart, so that you may also hear the inner voice. Having said this I pinpointed the *Latifah Qalb* of Amir Shakoor. He came under ecstasy and started uttering the Name of Allah aloud. The females of the household came out, whereas the children stopped playing and got to the audience. Amir Shakoor was ceaselessly uttering the Name of Allah. When he became a bit self-composed, he held my feet and said, "You have brought me under obligation by opening up a novel vista of spiritual experience to me." A learned man who was sitting close to me recited this Persian couplet:

جزاک اللہ کہ چشم باز کردی
مرایا جان جاں ہم راز کردی

"May Allah reward you for injecting insight into my soul and bringing me into contact with the Real Beloved."

The local ulema were very happy over the change which had occurred in Amir Shakoor. When the dinner was over the whole audience took the initiatory oath at my hands. Thank God, I got a "sufficient game." Whenever a large portion of an audience took oath of discipleship at the hands of Murshid-e-Alam (my Shaykh) he used to say humorously, "Thank God, I have got a lot of game today."

It has been mentioned in *Maqamat-e-Fadh'iqh* (a biographic account of a great saint, Maulana Fadhl-e-Ali Quresh) that once a large number of people penitently took an initiatory oath at his hands. The same night Maulana Quereshi saw in the dream that Satan was regretting that all his labour had been wiped off by the former. The Maulana's reply to the condemned Satan in the dream was he hoped he would wean away more and more people form satanic snares and bend them on the door of Allah in future.

Kingdom of Midnight

On June 24 soon after putting up our non-obligatory *Tahajjud* Prayer we rode off in two big cars towards Tirmidh. On our way we came across the palace of Sultan Sanjar. While sending up prayers to bless the departed soul an historical event flitted across my mind. In the territory of

Neemroze a saint would remember Allah day and night and zealously infused the remembrance of Allah into the hearts of his disciples. About two to three hundred dervishes (seekers of the Way) remained in his service at a time. His reputation spread throughout the territory. When Sultan Sanjar got wind of the saint's spiritual attainments, his devotional sentiments, prompted him to bequeath the Neemroze territory to the saint so that he may conveniently manage the stay and meals of his guests. Through an emissary the king sent an edict to the saint that he was giving over the royalty of Neemroze to him. The saint read the edict and wrote two things on its reverse side:

1. "May my fortune blacken like the dark night if I accept your offer!"

2. "Since the time the 'royalty of midnight vigil' has been bestowed upon me (by Allah), the royalty of Neemroze has slumped to a point which is even less in value than that of a mosquito's wing."

Maulana Rumi has alluded to this event in the following verses:

چوں چتر سنجری رخ بختم سیاہ باد
در دل اگر بود ہوس ملک سنجرم

"May the face of my fortune turn black like Sanjar's umbrella, if I have in my heart any greed for his country! From the day I have had the good tindings about the kingdom of midnight vigil

(Tahajjud), I am not prepared to buy the kingdom of Neemroze for a single barleycorn."

I was taking warning from Sanjar's mausoleum about the perishability of human life. It made me sad to think that those who once ruled the world with great pomp and show were finally lying buried under ground. Meanwhile, I came under reverie about poet-Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar who had pathetically elegized his own post-death situation. I was lost in these deep thoughts that Mohibullah came near me and said, "Hazrat, still a long journey lies ahead of us and we should move away from here."

Graveyard of Tanks

It was ten o'clock in the morning when we reached Tirmidh situated at the bank of the Oxus. Known as the gateway to Afghanistan this city had been the launching pad as well as the arms supplies centre of the Russian forces in the Afghan War. Here we saw thousands of tanks and armoured cars on both sides of the road. Mohibullah told me these were in a state of disrepair because Russia had to suffer an enormous loss in the Afghan War. On the sight of "the tanks graveyard" the Word of Allah flashed through my mind:

كم من فئة قليلة غلبت فئة كثيرة باذن الله والله مع الصابرين

"How often has a small party prevailed against a large party by Allah's Will. Allah is with those who remain steadfast." (2:249)

To be sure when Allah resolves He gets eagles killed by sparrows.

Tomb of Hakeem Tirmidhi

Hakeem Tirmidhi was counted among the ulema and pious men of his time. His tomb is situated at the bank of the Oxus. On the other side of this river stands Mazar Shareef, the famous city of Afghanistan. In his adolescence he read up Hadith with many teachers and then he made his name as a Hakeem (physician). The custodian of the monastery showed me round the clinic of the Hakeem as well as the underground cells where he kept his patients for treatment. It so appeared as if there was an underground hospital. Physical ailments apart, God had also made him an adept at curing souls. Thousands of people would approach him to seek his guidance regarding the spiritual domain. Above all, God had endowed him with physical beauty as well. There is an incident of his youth. Once a young woman came to him and said, "I am infatuated with you and I have come here with a motive. I wish you to have sex with me." But the fear of Allah came over him and he started weeping. The woman was ashamed of this reaction and went back. This incident faded out of his memory after some time.

Once in his old age he was performing ritual ablution that all of a sudden the incident relating to that woman crept into his mind. He thought that he should have fulfilled what the woman wanted and later asked God's forgiveness for his sin. This thought so irretrievably got sunk into his heart that all the force of his resolve failed to stamp it out. He fell in prostration and suppliantly begged for the grace of Allah. He fell asleep in this state. In his dream he saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ who asked him, "Hakeem Tirmidhi, why are you so sad?" The Hakeem submitted, "My lord, in my youth I was God-conscious and despite open temptation for sin I felt myself disinclined to commit it. But in old age my moral sense has so deteriorated that I find my soul sin-prone. Now my heart tells me that I should have committed the sin at that time. Alas! My hair has turned white but the heart has blackened." The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "The matter is simple. When you were young the time was nearer my age and hence it was good-prone. Now you have grown old, so the time has been bereft of good. Fall in the spiritual enlightenment of the atmosphere has exposed you to sinfulness. Your shedding of tears has gained acceptance in the sight of Allah." When Hakeem Tirmidhi woke up he felt that his heart was satisfied.

On Imam Tirmidhi's Tomb

Since the Tirmidh city is highly important from military point of view it remains out of the reach of tourists. Thank God, I moved round Tirmidh without any check or obstruction. From here we reached the Shairabad graveyard where stands the mausoleum of Abu Isa-bin-Muhammad-bin-Isa Tirmidhi.

Strange Incident

When we alighted from the vehicles and walked towards the mausoleum, we came across about forty men sitting on the way. One of them came forward towards us, saying that the meal was ready and we should take it. I said, "We have come here with a view to sending up prayers for the departed soul. First we will pay a visit to the tomb." He agreed to it. First we offered two supererogatory cycles of Prayer in the mosque. Then we went to the mausoleum, recited the Holy Qur'an, and performed meditation and prayed long-drawn-out prayers. This whole process spread over about two hours. When we were free from devotional engagement and wanted to go back, the same man came running and told me, "The meal is ready, please come and have it." I said, "We have meal with us. When we feel hungry we shall eat it. But he was adamant that we should accept the offer. Maulana Abdullah came round and told me, "Hazrat, be good enough to accept their offer because these people are committed to

Allah's remembrance." So we went to them. We were delighted to see that they were pious and Sunnah-oriented with illumined faces.

When we [illegible] down, their group leader told me, "Hazrat, a few days ago I had a dream in which a holy man told me that on such and such day a Naqshbandi Shaykh would visit the tomb of Imam Tirmidhi. If I wanted to profit from Divine grace, he said, I should seek my share of bounty from him. I related this dream to my friends and they got ready too. We belong to the Sarkhand Darya area and we have reached here in the morning after covering a journey of 200 miles. We have laid the table and have been waiting for you since morning. We are happy at your arrival because Allah has fulfilled our heartfelt desire. Kindly do us a favour by accepting us as your disciple and we shall eat meal later."

On hearing this Maulana Abdullah said, "Hazrat, strange, strange, strange!" I recited khutbah, inductive prayer, and brought them under the Naqshbandiah fold. When I toned up their Lata'if, I felt the condition of all of them was already fresh and sound. Thank God, I had rarely met a group of people who were perpetually engaged in the pursuit of Allah and His remembrance. Naqshbandiah *Nisbat* is a rare blessing indeed. If only we benefited from its blessings to the maximum. We set out from here at 6 pm and reached Shehr Nao at eleven o'clock at night. Thereafter how and when sleep came over us, we were not conscious of anything.

A Model Locality

On 25 June we happened to visit a quarter which stood at a foothill. The local mosque where I delivered a sermon after the noon Prayer was jam-packed with audience. All of them willingly joined the Naqshbandiah Order. The deputy Imam, Mullah Ahmad, was a deeply pious and God-conscious man. He told me that all the locals without exception regularly put up their five time congregational Prayers. All the males and females above the age of ten fluently talked in Arabic as if it was their mother tongue. It gave me surprise that even in this religion-free era, there existed such God-conscious souls. Glory be to Allah!

Zam Zam Baba

We were invited to dinner at the house of a wealthy man of the area. This was soon followed by a *bay'ah* (initiatory) process and a meditation sitting. The father of the host related us two interesting incidents related to Haj.

1. When we went on Haj, one of our fellow-pilgrims put some edibles in his luggage. In Russia, which is a very cold country even honey solidifies. He filled a plastic packet with honey and put it into his luggage. When we arrived in Saudi Arabia, which perennially remains hot, the honey melted by heat. When the customs official checked his luggage, the honey had spread over everything. "What is this?", they

asked him. He replied, "It is pure honey." The audience burst into laughter to hear this incident.

2. Relating his own incident he said that while returning from Haj he filled two large containers with Zam Zam. But at the time of luggage booking the Saudi Airlines officials told me that only one container was allowable in the flight. I persistently implored them to allow the second container as well but they turned a deaf ear to my request. When the departure time drew near I again made a request to them, "We have come from Russia where people thirst for even a drop of Zam Zam water. Please okay the second container as well." But the Saudi Airlines officials refused. Seeing no let-up in their stiffness I told them, "Please finally tell me if this Zam Zam container is allowed to be carried by me or not." They said, "It is not." There and them I removed the lid of the container and poured out all the water over my head. Without taking off my clothes I bathed in Zam Zam water in the presence of every body. The Arab people were surprised at my craziness. I undertook the journey in the same wet clothes.

After hearing his episode I told him" Well, henceforth I would call you by the name of Zam Zam Baba. He liked this epithet so much that after this day he came to be known as Zam Zam Baba.

Soiree of Poetry Recital

Some of Amir Shakoor's friends were newspapermen, poets and litterateurs. When they came to know that Amir Shakoor had accepted the discipleship of a Sufi master they were astonished. They urged him to introduce them to his Shaykh too. So it was decided that Amir Shakoor would give us a dinner next day. This time the males took it upon themselves to roast meat. Perhaps it was a peculiarity of the area regarding a special feast. After the meal a soiree of poetry recital was held. The poets and other men of cultivated taste recited such a beautiful Persian poetry that my heart spontaneously went out in praise of it. At the end I was requested by Amir Shakoor to recite some verses too. I would recite some Persian verses as I had heard from my elders.

میانِ عاشق و معشوق رمزیست
کراماً کاتبین را ہم خبر نیست

"Between the Lover and Beloved there exists such a subtle communication that even the Guardian Angels are not aware of it.

اللہ اللہ چہ شیریں ہست نام
شیر و شکر می شود جانم تمام

"Oh what an indescribably sweet Name it is that (while uttering it) my body and soul turn into a single sweet whole.

چشم بند و گوش بند و لب به بند
گر نہ یابی سر حق بر ما بخند

"Close your eyes and close your ears and close your lips. If you do not find the secrets of the Truth, you may laugh at me.

یک چشم زدن غافل از آں شاه نہ باشی
شاید کہ نگاه کند آگاه نہ باشی

"Don't be unmindful of the Lord for the twinkling of an eye lest He turns to you graciously and you should be unaware of it."

ما ہرچہ خوانده ایم فراموش کرده ایم
الا حدیث یار کہ تکرار می کنیم

"We have forgotten whatever we gained through studies, yet we repeat the Friend's gospel again and again.

ہزار خویش کہ بے گانہ از خدا باشد
فدائی یک تن یگانہ آشنا باشد

"Let thousands of God-alien relatives be sacrificed to the one alien who is Friend-oriented."

چوں رسی بہ کوئے دلبر بہ سپار جان مضطر
کہ مبادا بار دیگر نہ رسی بدیں تمنا

"Surrender your restless soul when you reach the Beloved's Lane, lest you fail to reach there with this longing again.

کفرست در طریقت ما کینہ داشتن
آئین ماست سینہ چوں آئینہ داشتن

"Harbouring grudge is ungodliness according to our way of looking of things. Our principle is to keep the heart transparent like the mirror.

ہرگز نمیرد آنکہ دلش زندہ شد بعشق
ثبت است بر جریدہ عالم دوام ما

"One whose Heart became alive through Love never dies. Our eternity is inscribed in the register of the world."

ہر چند پیر و خستہ وبس ناتواں شدم
کہ مرغ ہر چمنے گفتگوئے او دارد

"Though I have grown old, exhausted and emaciated, when I glanced at Your Face I became young.

ندانم آں گل خنداں چہ رنگ و بو دارد
کہ مرغ ہر چمنے گفتگوئے او دارد

"I wonder what would be the color and smell of the Blooming Flower that the bird of every garden is prompted to sing its praises."

Thereafter I recited the following quatrains:

نازم بچشم خود کہ جمال تو دیدہ است
افتم بپائے خود کہ بکویت رسدہ است

"I am proud of my eye that it has seen Your Beauty. I fall upon my own feet that they have treaded in Your Lane.

ہر دم ہزار بوسہ زنم دست خویش را
کو دامنت گرفتہ بسویم کشیدہ است

"Every moment I kiss my hand thousands times because by holding Your Skirt it has drawn it towards me.

بجز اس وصل ہر چیزے فضول است
زصد دنیا مرا وصلے قبول است

"Everything except union is absurd. I would prefer union to hundred worlds.

زمن پرسی دخول جنت چیست
وصال دوست در جنت دخول است

"You ask me what does entry to paradise mean? Union with the Friend alone is entry to paradise.

حسینے کرد سوئے من نگاہے
نمی دارم دگر کارے جز آہے

"A Beauty cast a glance at me. Now I have nothing to do except for sighing and groaning.

گناہم چیست قلب من زخم است
نگاہ او کند در سنگ راہے

"What is my sin? My heart is only a lump of flesh. His look cuts its way through the stone."

نی گویم کہ من از صاحبانم
بگویم ایں سگ باب فلانم
نگہ ہر شخص دارد بر سگ خویشم
چرا ایں را ندانی من ندانم

"I don't claim that I am one of the companions of the Beloved. I say only this that I am a dog of so-and-so's door. Everybody takes care of his dog. I am at loss to know why don't you know this?"

یکن ہر چشم ہر دم چشمہ داری
کہ گشت قلب راہ سیراب داری
دل تو جنت فردوس گردد
بہشتے را چرا در انتظاری

"Keep flowing the fountain of tears from your eyes all the time so that the field of your heart may be saturated. Your head would become the garden of paradise, why do you wait for paradise?"

خدا را کارکن اے نیم مومن
کہ جنت نیست اندر میم مومن
چہ کار آید تو اے بے کار انسان
کہ از کارے بود تکریم مومن

"O half believer, for God'sake, do work because being a believer by name is no guarantee for entry to paradise. What can you do, O idle man? Only through working a believer can win respect."

نہ خالی یارب از جے دلے کن
نہ تو محروم از آبے گلے کن
رساں تا شمع ہر پروانہ مسکین
نہ تو مہجور از گل بلبلے کن

"O God, do not keep my head devoid of Your love. Do not let me remain empty (of love) in this phenomenal world. Make the poor moth reach the lamp. Do not let the nightingale be separated from the flower."

دلِ ما دلبرانہ دیوانہ تست
بیا بے فکر خانہ خانہ تست
تو از شہد و شکر ما را لذیذی
دل اندر ہجر دانہ دانہ تست

"O my Beloved, my heart is crazy for You. Come unhesitantly to my home because it is in fact Your home. To me, You are more delicious than sugar and honey. In Your separation, my hear has broken into atoms and the atom is indeed Yours.

منم اشک فراق گلعذارے
شنیدم ایں زشور آبشارے
ہمی لرزم زناز نازنینے
چنیں می گفت شاخ بیقرارے

"I heard this from waterfall noise, "I am a tear which has trickled down in separation from the rose-cheeked Beloved." "I am shivering before the ego of the Beloved", so told me a trembling bough.

اگرچہ کمترم من بہترم من
بہ پیش چشم تو گر بہترم من
بہ مدح دوستاں انسان نہ باشم
سگم اندر نگاہت یا خرم من

"Though I am lowly, I am superior if I am good in Your sight. If I am a dog or donkey in Your sight, I cannot become a human for the praise of friends."

شنیدم دوست از دیوارِ فریاد
خدارا میکنی اے دوست کم یاد
برائے ذکر روز چند داری
مکن در کار دیگر وقت برباد

"Wailing from the wall came to my ears yesterday: O friend, you remember God in a casual way. You have only a brief life for the remembrance of God. Do not waste your time in other pursuits."

مکن فکر جہاں ویرانہ ایں است
بیا تعمیر دل کن خانہ ایں است
زدل بیگانہ افلاطون است
شنو ایں پند من دیوانہ ایں است

"Do not worry about this world as it is just a wasteland. Come and adorn your heart because it is the real home. Listen to my advice that even if Plato is indifferent to the heart he is not a sane man.

بہ شوق ماہ رویاں دل کبابم
رود عمرے دریں کار ثوابم
بہ خواب اندر نجاست جاہ و مال است
نہ عاشق بر نجاست چوں زبابم

"The flame of love of illumined faces has consumed my heart (and) my life is passing in this rewarding pursuit. Wealth and status is filth, and dreamlike at that. I don't fall on filth like the fly.

وگر سودا مکن در قلب گم شو
و لیکن غرق از سر تا بہ دم شو
زگوشہ تا بہ رطلب بر شیزی
سراسر گوش تا آواز قم شو

"Don't think of anything else, just be lost in your heart but this should be a thorough absorption. Don't rise from the corner till you achieve your purpose. Be all ears till you hear the voice 'rise' "

At the end I recited the following couplets of lqbal's poem "Naleh-e-lblees" (Lamentation of Satan):

ابن آدم چیست یک مشت خس است
مشت خس را یک شرر از من بس است
اندریں عالم اگر جز خس نبود
ایں قدر آتش مرا دادن چہ سود

"What is man? He is just a handful of straws. A spark from me is enough for (burning) a handful of straws. If there was nothing in this world except

the straws, what was the use of giving me so much fire?

اے خدا یک زندہ مرد حق پرست
لذتے شاید کہ یابم در شکست

"0 God, (I want to meet) a spiritually awakened, Truth-oriented man so that I may relish the sense of defeat (at his hands).

How vocally did the audience articulate their appreciation of the verses read out by me hardly interested me. But what was of interest to me was that all of them wanted to take an initiatory oath at my hands. Thank God, I brought them to the fold of Naqshbandiah Order.

According to the late Khawjah Mohammad Abdul Malik Siddiqui, a great Naqshbandi Shaykh, when a Shaykh speaks some words of advice to the audience it is like playing the tambourine, and when he conducts a sitting of meditation it is like holding a show. Just as spectator's eyes are pleased with the feats of a juggler, so the hearts of disciples are pleased with the discourse and meditation conducted by their Shaykh. As soon as this thing came to my mind I was amused to think that I had to play even the Dugdugi (sort of small drum) in Persian. Yet I believe it would be great blessing to me if all this was accepted by Allah.

Khawja Allauddin Attar

Khawjah Allauddin Attar, son-in-law of Shah Naqshband and preceptor of Maulana Yaqub Charkhi, was one of the great Shaykhs of the Hisar Valley. Eminent ulema of the time were under his preceptorship. Allamah Abdul Oadir Jurjani was also his disciple. He wrote about Khawjah Allauddin Attar

والله ما عرفت الحق سبحانه وتعالیٰ ما لم اصل فی خدمت العطار

"By God, I would have been deprived of Divine gnosis if I had not sat at his feet.

After sending up prayers to benefit his soul, Mohibullah led me from his tomb to a place where Khawjah Attar would worship Allah.

MARKS ON THE STONE

At this place I happened to see some sacred relics of Khawjah Attar. Mentionable among them was a stone on which he used to offer his Prayers. It was a white stone of the size of the prayer-carpet with a smooth surface. Its peculiarity was the visible impressions of the Khawjah's feet and prostrations which had been left on it over the years and sharply contrasted them with the rest of the smooth surface of the flat stone. I was, by the grace of God, lucky enough to perform on it two non-obligatory cycles of Prayer.

Surprisingly our elders had worshipped so much that even the stone had worn away under their wieght. How beautifully an Urdu poet says:

نشان سجود تیری جبیں پر ہوا تو کیا
کوئی ایسا سجدہ کر کہ زمیں پر نشان رہے

"It matters little if your prostrations have left an impression on the forehead, let you make such a prostration as should leave an abiding mark on the earth."

Ridiculously, even the prayer-mats hardly wear out today. An elder would say that if a man recoils from the prayer-mat and finds it hard to sit on it even for a few minutes he definitely lacks the love and remembrance of Allah. The habit of sitting on the prayer-mat is indeed one of the blessings of Allah.

We know from the general practice that first the seeker gets into the habit of sitting in the remembrance of Allah till his body is softened enough to invoke the Name of Allah. It is not unusual for those who have advanced on the Sufi Path to sit in meditation for an hour or two. As the Holy Qur'an says

ثم تلین جلودھم وقلوبھم الیٰ ذکر اللہ

".then their skins and hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah" (23:39)

This Qura'nic verse shows that the softening of the body precedes that of the heart so that it may conveniently receive

and assimilate Divine blessings. A seeker who is unable to perform meditation even for a few minutes he should know that he is killing his time unprofitably. In contemporary society seekers assert their commitment to Allah, yet they eschew the practice of meditation and Allah's remembrance. Some resort to the untenable pretext of the lack of spare time. One can give an example as if Majnu (traditional Arabian lover) should say that he has no time to remember Laila, the famed beloved of this lover. In such a baffling situation should one offer any comment?

Departure for Syr Asia

On June 26 Damlah Ahmad Jan, a distinguished Mufti of Syr Asia, came to the house of Mohibullah along with his friends and took the initiatory oath at my hands. I was told that he was a popular religious scholar of the area and famed for his awe-inspiring piety. Even from his facial expressions he looked to be a God-oriented man. He had already taken all the Naqshbandiah lessons but his Shaykh's death brought his spiritual progress to a standstill. Hundreds of people participated in his discourses. He requested me that I should be kind enough to visit Syr Asia. The programme, in consultation with Maulana Abdullah, was finalized.

Syr Asia is situated in Uzbekistan and part of the Serkhand Darya region. The locals here strictly follow the shariah laws and hold the ulema in high regard. Most of the

Sufi Shaykhs have their monasteries and they preserved the sanctity of the religion even during the Communist era as borne out by their illumined faces. A few hours drive took us to Langar Basti where stood Jame Masjid (chief mosque) Damlah Ahmad Jan with a nearby madresah. Damlah Ahmad Jan had three sons who were grounded in Islamic disciplines and taught the madresah students. His two daughters also had religious education and were married to the ulema. Next day we were invited to dinner by his son-in-law who had his house at a luxuriantly green and fertile place in a hilly area. It was surrounded by fruit trees, flowers-beds and greenery with a fragrant atmosphere. The house was beautifully built with an exquisitely designed balcony under which flowed a cascade. What gave the atmosphere a peculiarity of its own were the magical sound of the running water, cold breeze and the strange sweet singing of the birds. I thought about the heavenly balconies and the unique blessings which waited the blessed souls to their utmost delight. Here I completed the lessons of *Masharbat* for Damlah Ahmed Jan and as for *Muraqbah Ma'iyyat* (Meditation of Companionship) he had already experienced its subjective dimensions. Most of the day was spent in conducting meditation. I was under an inexpressible sway of Divine love.

Honour for Dalmah Jan

When the mid-afternoon Prayer was over I discoursed on the subject of remembrance by the Heart and Maulana Abdullah was my interpreter. On the conclusion of the discourse I invested Damlah Ahmad Jan with the initiatory robe (that is to say, from henceforth he could recruit disciples on his own). The whole audience went into raptures. Such was the state of their moaning and weeping that no voice was audible. Maulana Abdullah become tearful too. I myself was in raptures with moanful words descending on my tongue. There was such an overwhelming inrush of Naqshbandiah affinity *(Nisbat)* that even an uninspired man like me could clearly perceive it.

When I came to pray the audience started rolling about like a slaughtered bird. At the end they embraced Damlah Jan and congratulated him. When we stepped out of the mosque Damlah Ahmad Jan picked up my shoes. First he held them to his chest, rubbed their soles against his cheeks and wept bitterly. This made the audience cry aloud. Maulana was reciting this couplet again and again:

قال را بگزار مرد حال شو

پیش مرد کامل پامال شو

"Give up discursive talk and undergo inner experience subjecting yourself to self-effacement before a spiritual adept"

صد کتاب و صد ورق در نار کن
جان و دل را جانب دلدار کن

"Put hundreds of books and hundreds of pages to fire and devote yourself heart and soul to the Beloved"

Rain of Ruobles

A large multitude of people accompanied me when I walked home. As soon as I reached the door of entrance, roubles started raining down on me. In fact the household ladies had already received a good word about my arrival. This unusual welcome was a token of their devotional sentiments. In my heart I was thanking God who had rained paper money on my head instead of stones.

We hear about Khawjah Abu Yazeed Bistami that once he put on new clothes and was going to the mosque to offer Friday Prayer. All of a sudden some woman threw ash into the street from a rooftop which all fell upon his head. Those who were around got embarrassed but Khawjah Abu Yazid thanked God. Someone was surprised to see that he was thankful even in such an embarrassing situation. To that he replied, "If my carnal soul is anything to go by, burning charcoals should have been showered upon my head. Thank God, I was paid out only by the ash."

Targramh Mosque

Next day the ulema and Sufi Shaykhs of the area kept calling upon Damlah Ahmad Jan from morning to afternoon in order to congratulate him. There was such a bourgeoning crowd as if people were returning home after offering their Eid Prayer. Every face was perceptibly reflective of joy and happiness. Gaining *Nisbat* (spiritual affinity) by whosoever was an occasion which was celebrated by the people of Sarkhand Darya in an unprecedented way.

It has been truly said that it transcends the instinctive capacity of the carrion-eating vulture to esteem flower. Only the fragrance-prone nightingale knows the flower-value. In order to say the noon Prayer a convoy of vehicles set off for Targram Masjid. I remarked, “Maulana Abdullah, it seems as if a wedding party is going.” The Maulana spontaneously replied, “Hazrat to tell the truth, you are the bridegroom.” I said, “Thank God, the party is proceeding towards the house of God, instead of a human abode.” This gave joy to the audience.

A Wonderful Dream

We performed the noon Prayer in the Targram mosque. There was a gathering of local ulema, God-conscious men and Sufi Shaykhs. I touched off the theme of God-consciousness. The discourse was still in the process that an old man entered the mosque. On the very first sight of my

face he began to weep so loudly that the whole gathering, instead of listening to the sermon, fixed their eyes on him. Some people rose to their feet out of respect. A young man stepped forward to take him along. I was at loss to know the reason underlying this puzzling matter. On my inquiry Maulana Abdullah told me that the old man was a Sufi Shaykh of the area and had thousands of disciples. When he drew nearer he embraced me and started wailing. I told him to sit down but he requested me to let him make a disclosure to the audience. When I readily consented he said that a few days back his wife was told in a dream that on such and such day her husband had been called by the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be present in Masjid Targram at the time of the noon Prayer. When the old Shaykh was apprised of this dream by his wife he took it in this way that on the divined day he would chance upon such a man whose life would be regulated by the observance of Sunnah. He added, "According to the dream I have reached the mosque and found the guest Shaykh discoursing. So it is my earnest request that first he should make me his disciple and then restart his sermon." Afterwards he again began to weep. Damlah Ahmad Jan rose to his fee and weepingly said, "The respectable audience, give full respect to the worthy guest and avail yourself of this golden opportunity." There Mohibullah stood with tearful eyes and told the audience how in a dream they were foretold about the visit of three men and three guests came the same day. When

the audience heard all this, they were seized by a great fervour and told me to start the initiatory process. So I spread the cloth for *bay'at*. Thank God, scores of ulema joined the Order and 15 of the new disciples were such as already had been invested with initiatory powers by some Shaykhs. As for the commoners they were simply getting happy by glancing at my face and uttering "Glory be to Allah." Damlah Ahmad Jan told me, "Hazrat the popularity which Allah has bestowed on you has never been given to anybody in our territory." I said Maulana, I will take it a real treat if I gain acceptance in the sight of Allah too."

A young girl, so goes a story, was being dressed up as a bride. When her friends adorned her with ornaments and made her put on make-up one of them remarked, "Well-done! How beautiful are you looking!' When the other friends paid her similar compliments tears welled up in the bride's eyes. A friend asked, "What is the matter? Why are you weeping?" The bride replied, "All of you are telling me that I look beautiful. Yet, I simply wish that I may capture the attention of the man for whom I am being put to beautification by you people. If I do not strike his eye as beautiful, all of your admiration will be of no avail to me."

City Administrator's Feast

When the assembly was over about an hour was consumed by shaking hands with the gathering. The ulema

and Shaykhs insisted on embracing me. Some people, going by their belief, got sanctified their rosaries by the blow of my breath. Some were simply touching my clothes as a mark of reverence. Some fervent souls even started kissing my face. All seemed to be lost in the same centripetal yearning. When we came out of the mosque, Damlah Ahmad Jan said to me, "Hazrat, the scene like يدخلون فى دين الله افواجا 'people entering the religion of Allah in troops' has been witnessed by us today." I told him, الحمد لله وحده و نصر عبده "Thank God, His slave has been helped by Allah." He was very glad to hear this reply and told me, "Hazrat, it is your apposite and to-the-point replies which have captured our heart." I said, "Kindly pray for me so that Allah may make it easy for me to answer the angel's questions in the grave." Maulana Damlah Jan said, "We are just leaving for the city administrator's residence where about 75 ulema and Shaykhs of the area have been invited as well." Accordingly we reached the house of the administrator in order to partake of his feast. I need not to describe the splendid arrangements in detail. Yet after eating meal I discoursed on the topic of thankfulness of riches. The city administrator could not help being tearful on it. When we were about to return home he told me, "You are leaving for Tashkent tomorrow. God willing, I will come to see you off on the runway of the airport." I took leave and we reached the place of our stay late at night.

Conceit or Deceit?

It was on Tuesday, the 30th of June, when we were to fly from Syr Asia to Tashkent. There was such a big crowd of visitors that I became exhausted. I almost dragged myself into the car like a patient who falls on the bed like a dead weight and rushed to the airport. Since I and Maulana Abdullah were to board the plane from the foreign terminal, we were afforded a one-hour duration which I spent in the remembrance of Allah by His grace. Most of the time I kept asking for God's forgiveness with closed eyes. We are told that if the doing of a good deed is followed by seeking God's forgiveness, there are more chances of its acceptability in the sight of Allah. Indeed He does not come hard on a man who falls short of His yardstick.

When the plane's departure was announced, I and Maulana Abdullah proceeded from the lounge towards the runway. The plane stood quite near the building. I was surprised to see that the city administrator was present on the runway according to his promise. He told me that he got the permission of civil aviation officials for the entry of 40 people to the runway because he had informed them that his Shaykh was to embark on the air journey. Then he took me to the 40- member group of ulema who were present there to see me off. I was glad to meet Maulana Ahmad Jan and other ulema on the runway. Meanwhile the plane passengers also started coming. Damlah Ahmad Jan told them, "An adept

Shaykh is today departing from our territory. Avail of this opportunity and get your hearts God-oriented. As Damlah Ahmad Jan was a prominent personality of the area, the passengers heeded his call and began to draw near me. I started infusing the Name of Allah into their hearts. Thank God, I pinpointed the *Latifah Qalb* to the passengers. When I finished this task an airhostess came forward and stood before me. I thought that perhaps she had come to take the boarding card but when it was given to her, she told me, "Please put your finger on my breast as well as you did in the case of the men." I was at a loss to take it a fanciful conceit or deceit.

I told Damlah Ahmad Jan to drive home to the woman that we were forbidden to touch the body of an unrelated woman. She said, "Why cannot you touch?" I told her that Islamic law forbade it. She replied that she herself was allowing me to do it and after having said that she drew closer to me. Seized with fear I flitted behind Damlah Ahmed Jan like a frightened goat. Meanwhile the officer-in-charge of the airport came in his car and told me after greeting that he had come to seek my blessings. Thank God, his arrival kept off the airhostess.

Bay'ah during Flight

When I embarked the airbus after saying goodbye to friends, many of them were tearful. I felt as if I had a dream which broke off only a moment ago. As soon as I thought of Tashkent, the thought of Abbas Khan and Dada Khan Noon

came to my mind. Meanwhile, the plane started running on the runway. I recited the Declaration of Faith (There is no diety but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) and was lost in the thought of the Real Beloved by shutting my eyes. After about 30 minutes of our take-off Maulana Abdullah drew my attention to a passenger, sitting close to him, who wanted to take the initiatory oath. I told him that it would be done after landing at the Tashkent airport. He said, "At that time everybody would be in a hurry and now that you are at leisure, you can afford to induct me into your discipleship." I was about to do that when another passenger occupying a back seat said something to Maulana Abdullah in a loud voice. I asked him what the passenger wanted to say. The Maulana replied smilingly يريدون ان يبايعونك "They all intend to take the initiatory oath at your hands." I told Maulana Abdullah to spread his turban. Thank God, the turban was spread between the two rows and the passengers held it with their hands. Those sitting near me held it with two hands and the ones who were away from me held it with one hand. There were about 150 passengers in the plane. I read out the inaugural address and made them repeat the wording of the initiatic pact. Thank God, all the people repeated the wording aloud. The airhostess opened the cockpit and let the pilot view the scene as well. The pilot who seemed to be Russian laughed at the initiatory *bay'ah* spectacle after the manner of children who are tickled into

laughter by the sight of zoo animal's feats. I was thankfully saying in my heart, "O God, You graciously blessed a tardy and lowly person like me so much that I was able enough to channelise the spiritual grace of my Shaykhs even during a flight." While uttering the wording of repentance I hugely relished indeed. When the *bay'ah* process was over Maulana Abdullah gave the audience a detailed description of the exercises and formulas on the Order in the Uzbek language. In the end I presided over a contemplative sitting.

Courtesy of an Airhostess

When the plane was about to land a passenger sitting beside Abu Uthman asked him, "Who is this Shaykh? What is he doing to all people?" Abu Uthman replied, "He is telling them how to invoke the Name of Allah. But why are you so anxious? He said, "I am an emissary of President Islam Karimov. I therefore wanted to know all details." Abu Uthman thought he was perhaps an official of some secret agency. So he did not deem it fit to carry on the dialogue. When the plane landed at the Tashkent airport the airhostess told Maulana Abdullah that we would be the first to disembark. As I came down a protocol officer, along with six cops and a limousine, stood before me. He told me that they had received a phone call from the aeroplane to this effect that a VVIP was arriving to be received by them. "We will take you in the lounge with protocol", he added. When I got

in the vehicle it was glittering like a seven-star hotel. As we the three men were seated, the secret agency guy also wanted to enter the vehicle. The protocol officer asked Abu Uthman if he was with us. To his negative reply the man was dropped from the vehicle by the protocol officer. While getting down he asked Abu Uthman where we were proceeding to. "We are going to see Islam Karimov", Abu Uthman said laughingly.

The uniforms of the protocol staff were so beautiful and attractive that on sight one would be simply left by wondering about.

We were dropped in the VIP lounge of the airport by the protocol officials who told us that tea was ready for us. In a room there stood a table which was bedecked with a rich variety of dainties along with tea. All this which unimaginably descended on us as a sheer Divine grace rather than a privilege made all the three of us smile at one another exhibiting a delightful sense of gratitude to Allah.

The import of the following Urdu verse exactly comported with our situation:

کہاں ہم اور کہاں یہ نکہت گل
نسیم صبح تیری مہربانی

"We and the fragrance of the Rose are poles apart. O breeze of the morning we thank thee for thy (intermediary) gesture.

After taking tea we came out of the lounge, took a taxi and proceeded to the Tourism Hotel. While riding in the vehicle we were feeling a clear sense of our own worthlessness. Yet elders say if you get honour without aspiring to it, you should take it as a God-given favour. You should, however, warn the lower self that One Who gives you honour can also put you to an abject humiliation.

CHAPTER 4

A JOURNEY TO KAZAKHISTAN

On 1 July we left Tashkent for Alma Ata. Maulana Abdullah's seat was confirmed as Abu Uthman reached one day late his ticket could not be confirmed. When we proceeded from the Toursim Hotel to the airport, Maulana Abdullah said to me, "Hazrat, where should we go?" According to the law national passengers and foreign passengers have to go through separate terminals. But the flight was scheduled to take off soon. I therefore said Maulana, "We should all go to the foreign terminal and leave everything to God." At that time we faced a two-fold problem: choice of terminal and the unconfirmed seat of Abu Uthman. I constantly prayed to God to solve the problem to our satisfaction.

Divine Help

When the taxi stopped near the airport building, Maulana Abdullah hurriedly alighted from it. I thought perhaps he wanted to remove the luggage. As I got down after paying the taxi fare to the driver I could see Maulana Abdullah nowhere. I asked Abu Uthman, "Where is Maulana Abdullah?" He told me that the Maulana had sprinted off into the building. In the meantime Maulana Abdullah also came up and told me with reference to his talk with the security officer, "First, I cannot go through this terminal. Second, Abu Uthman's seat is not confirmed, hence he cannot go with us today. Yet he can join us in Alma Ata tomorrow." Enraged by this I took Maulana Abdullah to task and told him, "Why did you do this on your own? If you had accompanied me to the security man and quried him, I would have acted upon him and hopefully won his favour." The Maulana silently put up with my rebuke and said, "Hazrat, forgive me this time and I shall be careful in the future." I told him, "Now you should go along with me and do what I tell you." Accordingly, we took our luggage and entered the building. As soon as the security officer saw me, approaching he stood up and made salaam to me, allowing three of us to get in. The first hurdle was removed.

There was no other passenger for luggage booking. We went straight to the counter. The lady, in charge of it, took our tickets and checked in the computer. Standing three

meters away I was exerting my spiritual influence on her with Maulana Abdullah being engaged in dialogue with her. The female official told him, "This terminal is meant for foreign nationals alone and national passengers should go through a separate terminal." Maulana Abdullah said, "He is our guest and we are his interpreters. This makes it necessary that we should go together." She said, "All right, I let you go through this terminal." But when she ckecked in the computer, Abu Uthman's seat was not confirmed. She told Maulana Addullah that he could go but not Abu Uthman. I asked Maulana Abdullah to tell the lady that she should at all events, make her full effort and I will pray for her. She kept gazing at my face for some time. Then she picked up the receiver and talked to some officer, telling him that she wanted to give seat to a passenger. On the other side he forbade her to do that. But she said, "There stands in front of me a personality whom I can't refuse." The officer told her, "I forbid you." But she said, "I inform you that I have okayed the seat." Having said this she stamped Abu Uthman's ticket. When we all received the boarding cards Abu Uthman's eyes lit up with joy and Maulana Abdullah said, "Hazrat, this spiritual attention is a strange blessing." I said, "On countless occasions I have witnessed its miraculous results." Taking our boarding cards we proceeded to the lounge and we had to pass our manual bags through the X-ray machine. When we moved forward a female official checked our boarding cards

and after seeing Abu Uthman's ticket she said that his ticket was not confirmed and then how he could go. I was upset that a new obstruction had cropped up. Meanwhile, the door of an adjacent room opened and a young man rushed out of it. He said to the girl, "The tea is getting cold and I have been waiting for you since long." She said, "The seat of this passenger was not confirmed. How did he get the boarding card?" The young man told her, "Leave the matter. You need not meddle in it." Having said this he put his arm round her waist and took her in the room. Strange are the ways of Providence. What seemed to be impossible was made easy by Him. The truth is that if God wants to benefit anybody, all the world joined together cannot do harm to him. On the other hand if God wants to harm anybody, all the world combined cannot benefit him. An Urdu poet has beautifully expressed this idea in the following couplet:

مدعی لاکھ برا چاہے تو کیا ہوتا ہے

وہی ہوتا ہے جو منظور خدا ہوتا ہے

"Whatsoever evil designs the enemy may harbour, you have nothing to worry about. Because nothing prevails except the Will of God."

Alma-Ata-The Smiling Beauty

When our plane took off and soared into space the snow-capped mountain tops rose in our view. On the one side

are the sky-high peaks of the Pamirs, called the "Roof of the World", and on the other side exists the range of the Ti'een Shi'een Mountains standing like a wall on China's frontier. To the north is Siberia, on the one side is Russia's Volga valley and on the other side is the Caspian Sea. In Urdu the word Cossack is used in the sense of a dacoit and this has perhaps historical reasons. We are told that Chingiz, aided by Cossacks, had raised an army which took the world by storm and pushed the Russians up to Kiev. The word Cossack applies to the tribal people. They are reputedly skilled in agriculture and rearing cattle. In the Silk Route days they would pounce upon caravans and rob them. This gave them the nickname of Cossacks, identified with robbers. Areawise Kazakhstan is larger than the whole sub-continent, so much so that five countries of the size of France can be packed on its surface. The total area is 27 lakh square kilometers but its population is only 13 million.

The peculiar dimension of Kazakhstan, a Muslim component of former Soviet Union, is that it has in its possession extremely lethal weapons. Moreover, the Kremlin had also set up here a station to launch vehicles into space. In all 1000 space flights had successfully been sent from this station but without being brought to the knowledge of the world. It was also a launching pad of famous space station Mir. Local reports say that when Russia made atomic bombs with the destroying capacity of a limited range, she chose the

deserts of Kazakhstan for detonative experiment. Yet radioactivity took in its sweep a lot of villages and human habitations, killing thousands of people. But the Russian government did not let the world have even a whiff of this human tragedy. Even today children are born here with deformed bodies. When Stalin had banished the Jews from Russia the majority of them settled in Kazakhstan.

To my inquiry about the meaning of Alma-Ata, Maulana Abdullah said, "It has three widely known senses. First, it produces very delicious apples and for this reason it is called as the Father of Apple. Second, in World War II twenty-eight local soldiers had halted the advance of Hitler's forces. In order to commemorate their memory a memorial containing their names was erected here in a garden. For this Alma-Ata means faithful. The third sense was established by the rural people. They see hustle and bustle all around enhanced by a pleasant sight of modern buildings and wide roads with the growth of flowers and fruit trees on both sides. They gave the city the name of "The Smiling Beauty." In the neighbourhood of the Alma-Ata city there exists the world's largest skiing mountain Peak which is visited by the skiing sport fans all the year round. Another seductive feature of the Alma-Ata city is a magnificent wooden building which stands in a garden and no iron nail has been used in it. The local people are reputed for rearing horses and they usually eat the horse-meat as well. The conversation was going on when the airhostess

announced that the aeroplane was about to land at the Alma-Ata airport.

Alma-Ata's Prinicipal Mosque

We performed our dawn Prayer at the airport and then rode off in a taxi to the principal mosque where we slept. After saying our noon Prayer we had a meeting with the deputy Grand Mufti. It was Thursday and we kept meeting with people individually. The mosque was spacious enough but an agreement had been made with the Turkish Government for the construction of a new splendid one and its foundation-stone was to be laid on Friday. There was also Madresah Arabiah beside the mosque with lodging facility for the students. Surprisingly there were no worshippers or Prayer leader during the dawn and mid-afternoon Prayers. On looking into the matter I sensed that the Grand Mufti had hand in it. I came to believe that he was indeed spokesman of the Communist government. He had learnt the Arabic language only to project his image of a believer with attachment to Islamic symbols, yet he was a disbeliever at heart. Having learnt my impression about the Grand Mufti Maulana Abdullah said to me, "Hazrat, you have one hundred per cent reached the heart of the matters. When he had become the Grand Mufti he held a function in collaboration with the President to which all Muftis, Khateebs and Imams of the country were invited. The President announced the

good news of the appointment of the Grand Mufti. Later the Mufti made a speech and in the end he made the audience pledge allegiance to him, telling them to kowtow to him. As for the yes-men of the government, they immediately followed the order. But the conscientious souls kept themselves aloof. Consequently they lost their mosque jobs there and then and were replaced by men of government choice, that is to say, the ignoble souls came up to rule the roost.

Now all the Imams and Khateebs of the country are under domination of the Grand Mufti and he is under the direct control of the President. The Grand Mufti only delivers the Friday sermon and everything else is consigned to the care of the deputy Grand Mufti. As for the performance of compulsory Prayer, there goes a saying that when there is no one to check you, do freely whatever you like. I was sorry to hear all this and thought that I would visit him next day.

Visit to the Grand Mufti

I met the Grand Mufti at ten o clock in the morning on Friday. After a brief conversation he told me, "We want to bring in here the Turkish brand of Islam. The Pakistani people are extremist with regard to religion. We live in an advanced country, we should make Islam flexible. Because "religion is easy." Meanwhile, I kept directing my spiritual attention to the Mufti. But I felt he was factually not the

Mufti who issued fatwas (edicts), rather he had thrust such position upon himself. The love of the world was deeply embedded in his heart. Maulana Abdullah told him, "Our Shaykh (spiritual guide) has come here to spread the *Nisbat* of the Naqshbandiah Order." The Mufti said, "I give him my permission. He can go anywhere in the country and make a discourse in any mosqu My prayers and good wishes are with him." The Tradition says, "If any guest of the community comes to you, give him honour." I took it as a favour and told Maulana Abdullah to beg leave. The Mufti gave his permission and accompanied us to the door to see off. I never met him again.

Foundation of a New Mosque

There was a Turkish delegation to lead the Friday Prayer. The man who made the speech was clean-shaven, bare-headed and was wearing a Western dress. In his speech he said, "By building a mosque here we want to establish its branches whole over the country. Turkey is a model Islamic country. There are thousands of mosques in Istanbul and each one has a capacity to accommodate thousands of worshippers. From the angle of its progress Turkey is part of Europe. All of you should therefore cooperate with Turkey." The Khutbah (sermon) was delivered by the Grand Mufti. Thank God, the Prayer was led by a guest Shaykh of Turkey who practised Sunnah of beard, otherwise we might have been deprived of

the Friday Prayer. Thereafter the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone was observed. Hundreds of men and women had come from the Alma-Ata city to view this ceremony. After offering the foundation-stone prayer I came back to the mosque.

Kazakh Damsel's Dream

We had hardly entered the mosque when two women came walking towards us. I told Maulana Abdullah to find out their purpose. After his talk with them he told me that they were mother and daughter and lived at a distance of fifty miles. They had come to participate in the foundation-stone laying ceremony. A few days back Deenah, the daughter, had seen in her dream a holy man having a illumined face with a staff in his hand. When she woke up in the morning she related to her mother everything about the saint. The type of clothes he was wearing, his total figure, facial cuts and expression and his complexion. Mother told her daughter that people of this sort were generally found in mosques. When they contacted the relevant quarters they came to know about today's ceremony and their eagerness for participation in it took them to this place. "As soon as Deenah caught sight of your face, she told her mother that it was the same Shaykh whom she had seen in her dream. Both the women kept gazing at your face all the time. "Now they want to become your disciples." Maulana Abdullah added. I made them repeat the initiatory words of repentance and brought them in the

fold of the Order. Thank God that was the beginning of dissemination of the Naqshbandiah Energy-line (*Nisbat*) in Kazakhstan. The two women were still sitting when a group of young men and women entered the mosque and started drawing near us. Maulana Abdullah rose to his feet for their formal introduction. Within moments all the group members came to me. The males sat in from of me, while I motioned the females to sit to my right side.

Showbiz Troupe's Arrival

Maulana Abdullah said to me. "These are the varsity youths belonging to a department which imparts training to them to do acting in films. They are led by a girl who herself wants to talk to you." I agreed to that. A girl sitting on my right side said to me, "For the first time in my life I m talking to a personality who has filled my heart with awe. An imperceptible sense of fear has pervaded my heart. Though you are not looking at me, I am seeing your face. I am a varsity trainee and top-most dancer. Besides me, there are also some other girls who are getting education of modelling. Some boys and girls belong to the music section, while some boys are learning the art of painting and sculpture. We preceded form the university to the city to eat icecream but on seeing a crowd near the mosque we stopped. Meanwhile we saw you enter the mosque. Some of us thought that you seemed to be a foreign guest and proposed to get to know

about you. We have entered the mosque and are sitting before you." I briefly introduced myself. They were simply amazed when they learnt that I had degree in Electrical Engineering with thorough computer knowledge and also had participated in the European and other global conferences. They said that I looked to be only a Shaykh. I told them, "Yes, this is the real dimension of life and the purpose behind the creation of the universe. If eating food were the end of life there would have been no difference between men and animals. The excellence of man depends on good morals and character. The conversation continued for about an hour. Thereafter a young man whispered something in the ear of Maulana Abdullah who conveyed to me that he sought my permission to talk to me.

Discovery of Third Jewel

The young man said, "My name is Amir Timur. I am learning the art of painting at the varsity level. After listening to your discourse a change has occurred in my inner life. Now I want to leave everything and want to be instructed in the knowledge you teach." I told him that required an initiatory pact with a spiritual guide. He said "I am 100 per cent prepared for it. Kindly initiate me into the Path. When the young man came forward the other people wanted to know if they could also become disciples. Maulana Abdullah told them, "Anybody who repents of his past sins, he should come forward and repeat the utterances of the Shaykh." Upon this

the girls wanted to rise and advance too. The maulana told them to keep sitting and repeat the Shaykh's spoken words. After the initiatory address I made the audience repeat the words. After the initiatory address I made the audience repeat the words of repentance. When I prayed the audience burst into weeping. Most of all Deenah and the varsity dancer were weeping bitterly. Thank God, it was proved by the coming days that Amir Timur and the dancer had repented from the heart. Both of them left the university and after taking my advice they became life partners. Amir Timur took my company and travelled across Russia. Practically speaking, the Prophetic example became the lodestar of his life. Impressed by his piety the village people made Timur the Imam-Khateeb of the mosque as well as the madressah superintendent. This is how I discovered the third jewel on reaching Alma-Ata. Guided by Amir Timur his wife started the Qur'aan reading and now she herself instructs the village girls in Qur'aan. Amir Timur has quite often told most of his friends, "Look, I took to the virtuous path and God awarded me a '*hoor*' in this very world, otherwise there were a lot of young men who aspired to seek her hand. Now with a chador over her head when she recites the Holy Qur'aan she seems to be the paragon of *hoor*. To quote the Qur'aan

ذٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ

this is the grace of Allah that he awards to whomsoever He wants."

Stay at Chilak

On Friday after the mid-afternoon prayer Maulana Abdullah had gone to reperfrom his ablution when he came across a man who lived at a place 100 kilometers away from Alma-Ata. After a brief introduction he met with me and requested me to visit his home. Maulana Abdullah was of the view that by accepting his invitation I would be able to preach the Sufi gospel in, Kazakhstan'n villages. I showed my willingness too. Next day after travelling for two hours we reached Chilak. With all the facilities of life available Chilak had wide roads, spacious houses and peaceful atmosphere. Above all, the bond of mutual love and sense of brotherhood has had welded the people together. At the time of the noon Prayer it was announced in the mosque that a sermon would be delivered after the sunset Prayer. The word quickly went round the village. Both men and women started coming to see me. The host was briefed that women could not pay me a visit without purdah. The women were being surprised at it and posed a question though which way then they could be instructed in the religion. I told them that a programme would be held at 11 a.m exclusively for women. The women were overjoyed to hear it.

A large number of young men attended the discourse and they seemed to be all ears to listen to me. We faced an interpretation problem here. Maulana Abdullah had no knowledge of the Kazakh language and on the other hand

Uzbek was alien to the locals. Though Amir Timur was a local youth with the Kazakh language being his mother tongue, Urdu and Arabic were not untreatable to him. His understanding of English was also so so and hence the interpretation of the discourse was a difficult task. That day the Qur'aanic gospel—the revelation of every Prophet descended in the same language which was the mother tongue of his community became crystal clear to me. Allah says:

وما ارسلنا من نبی الا بلسان قومہ

"We never sent revelation to a Prophet except in the language of his community.

I made the proposal that Maulana Abdullah would interpret my Arabic speech in Russian and then Amir Timur would turn it into the Kazakh language. Accordingly I discoursed in Arabic. Maulana Abdullah rendered it into Russians and Amir Timur turned it into the Kazakh language. Thus we were able to manage the situation through two interpreters. Owing to their hatred for the Russians it was disgusting for the locals to speak the Russian language in the mosque. But we too had no other solution to this problem. I therefore well employed the weapon of directing my spiritual attention to their hearts. As a result of it people's hearts took the message which I wanted to convey to them. When the discourse was over all the people joined the Naqshbandiah Order. The children's enthusiasm was something that immediately arrested one's attention.

Women's *Bayah*

Next day the host's house was filled with women at the scheduled hour. So I had to make the discourse through the loudspeaker which was brought from the mosque. It was decided that I would repeat last night's discourse in English and Amir Timur would turn it into the local language. Maulana Abdullah expressed his hesitation that since the men folk had already listened to this discourse, they won't be interested in it again. I said, "Maulana, Allah has invested the Shariah with such a fascination that even if an advice is given again and again it has its impact, and if the advice is overwhelmed by inner outpouring the impact redoubles. The people having a taste for song listen to the same single song repeatedly but everytime they have a new sense of exhilaration. Children go on the chewing-gum for more than an hour and continue to relish it. Similarly I would recite the Qur'aanic verses and there is such a magnetic pull in the Qur'aan that it would move the hearts of the audience. It happened accordingly. When the discourse was over the audience took the remembrance of Allah from me, sat in meditation and said that they relished more than the previous day. During the collective prayer the women started wailing. There was such an inrush of divine blessing that even the men became tearful. Maulana Abdullah was very happy. When the sermon was over he told me that he had experienced an increase in his faith. That was an indication of believers:

واذاتليت عليهم آيته زادتهم ايمانا

"When the (Qur'aanic) Verses are recited to them, their faith rises" says the Qur'aan.

New Name for New-born

The host's son was married two years ago and his wife was pregnant. Next day she gave birth to a son and ardently desired that her son should her named after honorable guest. So his name was proposed as "Zulfiqar Ahmed." The entire household was extremely happy at it. I lavished my prayers upon the new-born. The infant's father told me that he had resolved to give him over to the service of the religion. With reference to Imam Ghazali I quoted a Tradition:

"If a child's parents are resolved from the beginning that they would give religious education to him, as long as he remains alive they would be rewarded every breath he takes."

Khawjah Ahmed Yassvi رحمة الله عليه

Khawjah Abu Yusaf Hamdani رحمة الله عليه was one of the towering Shaykhs of the Nawshbandiyah Order. Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani رحمة الله عليه and Khawjah Moeenuddin Chishti رحمة الله عليه are also said to have spiritually benefited from him. In different periods both of them attended him for some months and gained from him spiritual sciences and subtle inrushes characteristic of the Naqshbandiah Order. On this basis Abu

Yusaf Hamdani is called as the educative guide of the two great saints.

Khawjah Abdu Yusaf Hamdani's two deputies, Khawjah Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawaniؒ and Khawjah Ahmed Yasasviؒ, rose to great fame. The name of the former occurs in the line of our elders but a new line diverges from the latter. Khawjah Ahmed Yassvi's grave is situated in Tataristan. Maulana Abdullah told me that a few hours drive would take us there. I expressed my pleasure to that and the Maulana chalked out the programme.

Khawjah Ahmed Yassvi was one of those rare saints whose prayers were accepted by God. If he would look at anybody closely the remembrance of Allah would immediately be integrated into his heartbeat. An Urdu poet says:

نگاہ ولی میں وہ تاثیر دیکھی
بدلتی ہزاروں کی تقدیر دیکھی

"A strange effect was observed in a saint's look that the destiny of thousands of people was changed."

Khawajah Ahmed Yassaviؒ was totally Sunnah-oriented. People copiously benefited from his esoteric sciences and inspirations. When he attained the age of 63 he observed that his beloved Prophetﷺ had breathed this much on earth and he would live the rest of his life under the gound.

So he got built an underground cell for himself. All the time he engaged himself in the remembrance and worship of Allah till he breathed his last in the same cell.

ہر گلے را رنگ و بوئے دیگر است

True, every saint has his own characteristic and peculiar behavior towards Allah.

'Herd' of Saints

When we came out of the shrine after sending up prayers to the benefit of Khawjah Yassvi's soul we were awfully hungry. Maulana Abdullah was of the view that bread should be eaten with tea at some restaurant. But we had walked only a few steps when a woman came near the Maulana and said, "You people seem to be passengers." On receiving an affirmative reply she said, "I beseech you in the Name of God to accept eating meal at my home." He wanted to know my opinion and I replied without any hesitation. "If this woman had asked us to take shoe-thrashing from her in the Name of Allah, we were even prepared for it. Above all she is offering us food."

Maulana Abdullah divulged this thing to the woman and she burst into laughter and said. "Good luck has smiled on me that such pious men will be taking meal at my home." I said, "Maulana, where is the house of the woman?" Pointing her finger to a house she said, "There stands my home in front of you. Only a two-minute walk will take you there." All of us

started walking towards it. As soon as she got into the house she began to scream out some utterances to her daughters. One thing made Maulana Abdullah laugh so much so that he convulsed with laughter. I asked him why he was laughing. He said the woman was telling the female inmates out of overwhelming joy, "My young girls, hurry up and lay the table. A 'herd' (flock) of God's men is coming with me."

The good lady arranged a sumptuous feast and after eating meal we took a siesta. Thereafter we put up our noon Prayer and set out for our next destination.

JOURNEY TO KIRGHISTAN

On the three sides of the Kirghiz Republic lie the borders of Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan and Chine. Ethnically the people of this land are rooted in the Ktay province of China. Economically this Republic lacks the luster of other Republics. A large chunk of its territory consists of a hilly range. As for the practice of religion, Kirghizstan ranks in the second position after Uzbekistan. Kirghiz ulema and divines have close contacts with those of Namanghan and the Farghanah Valley.

Bashkik or Frunza

The Russian Communists had given the name of Frunza to the capital of Kirghizstan. But on achieving freedom the Kirghiz people replaced it with the name of Bashkik. Like Dushanbe this city has both old and modern buildings. The urban population has more liking for large and specious

houses. Most of the multi-storied buildings are owned by the State for official purposes.

On Monday, the 6th of July, we hired a taxi-cab from Alma-Ata and reached Bashkik. We had no acquaintance in this city. While setting off the Imam Masjid of Chilak had given us the home address of the Grand Mufti. When by the time of the noon Prayer we reached his house we came to know that he had gone somewhere and would return late. The Grand Mufti's Daughter caught sight of us somehow and sent her son with the message, "Though father is not at home, you should stay with us. The door of the guest-room is being opened for you." Since we were tired due to the journey, we went to sleep after offering the sunset Prayer.

We woke up late at night and offered our *Isha* Prayer. The Grand Mufti, Maulana Abdul Majeed, had also reached home. He was the son of a Major Shaykh of the Naqshbandiah Order but personally he had no bent of mind for the Sufi path. After having a brief chat with Mufti we again went to sleep.

After the morning Prayer the Grand Mufti saw us at the breakfast table and showed me a booklet written in Persian, saying it had been authored by his late father. I looked into it discovering a detailed description of five *lataif* (Essences) of *Alam-e-Amr* (World of Spirit) and two Essences of the corporeal world. I told the Grand Mufti that the booklet dealt only with first seven lessons and not with the whole Sufi

Path. He was surprised at it and put to me probing questions about the Naqshbandiah Order. After about an hour long dialogue session the Mufti divulged to me that he had immensely benefited from it and added, "If you deem it fit a programme may be arranged in the mosque after the sunset Prayer." I told him that it would be my pleasure to do what he wanted.

After the noon Prayer the Grand Mufti got the sermon programme announced in the mosque and consequently a considerable number of people gathered in the evening. I made the discourse while the Grand Mufti interpreted me. When the matter came to the initiative pact (*bay'ah*) the Grand Mufti was the first to grasp the cloth which was spread to involve the audience in the collective way. After making the gathering repeat the initiatory utterances I described in detail the exercises and formulas of the Order and conducted the meditation. When the programme was over the Mufti came home, replaced his shirt with a cope, wore turban instead of the cap and said, "My father put on such dress according to Sunnah. From today I have adopted it too." Thank God, the sacred outpouring of the Naqshabandiah Order changed hearts within moments.

Since we intended to stay in Bashkik for two days, next day the Grand Mufti took us in his car to show various mosques and madresahs. At two places we had tea and also took some people in the fold of the Order. At night the

household of the Mufti took the initiatory oath. [illegible] we were going somewhere that a restaurateur [illegible]. He came with a smile from some distance and [illegible]ed us like along-separated friend. This gave me a [illegible]se. "Pulao and kababs are ready at my restaurant. Please come and eat them." We apologetically showed our unwillingness but he remined adamant till the Mufti [illegible] won over by him.

We were compelled to oblige him. On this occasion an inspirational saying of distinguished *Tabi'i* Ata Ibn Abi Rabah flashed through my mind. "I am such a Sustainer Who shall provide you provision despite your persistent 'no, no.' O My slave. If you willingly seek provision from Me why shouldn't I give you."

Quarter of the Pious

The Grand Mufti told Maulana Abdullah that there stood at a distance of 50 kilometers from Bashkik a quarter whose dwellers had shifted from Daghestan at the time of the Communist Revolution. Now that place has grown into a sprawling quarter which has a principal madresah. Most of the men folk are educated and learned. Maulana Abdullah expressed the desire to go there. Thereupon the Grand Mufti made a telephonic contact with the madresah *Nazim* (administrator) who readily reached to take us there. He knew social etiquette and was well versed in the art of conversation. Soon he made a place for himself in our hearts. On our arrival

there we saw that about 200 students were lodged in the madresah and all of them had shining faces. As for the teachers we were much glade to see them because Sunnah was the distinctive feature of their attractive personalities. I made a discourse following the mid-afternoon Prayer which was rounded off with a collective prayer. We had out dinner at the administrator's house where we stayed at night. He presented a graphic picture of the Russian Revolution with the description of Communist atrocities. We were all praise for the firmly-rooted ulema who undauntedly stood up before the cruel rulers and made tremendous sacrifices for the cause of their faith.

We slept late at night yet we were supposed to rise in early hours to offer *Tahajjud* Prayer. In fact this is the time when we the fakirs are given daily allowance, that is, spiritual nourishment and incentives. I offered some non-obligatory cycles of Prayer and till the burst of the morning I remained engrossed in my spiritual exercises and formulas. After the morning Prayer this devotional engagement continued till *Ashraq* (non-obligatory Prayer at the spread of sunshine). At the breakfast table the Nazim told me, "Your discourse of the previous day was really inspiring, moreover your behavior was observed without letting you know it and at night I noticed your individual doings as well. Now we are crystal clear that you are a Sunnah-devoted Shaykh. We have submitted the entire report to the madresah Principal. On

account of illness and weakness he reaches madresah at 10 a.m and after a few hours he returns home. Today he will have a meeting with you. If he gave a green signal all the people of the locality would like to be initiated into the Sufi Path by you and learn Allah's remembrance. After a little while the Principal came and the very sight of his face reminded me of the Qur'aanic verse.

سیماهم فی وجوههم من اثر السجود

"The mark of them is on their foreheads from the traces of prostration. (48:29)

After the formal introduction he said to me. "What brings you?" I said, "There was a locality of pious people, according to the Tradition, and a sinful man was going towards it. He died on the way and he was forgiven by God. I too have come today towards the pious men in the hope that through this visit my sins will be wiped off." At this the Principal began to shed tears and said, "This is indeed your humility but we believe that you are like those people if a man looks at their face his sins slough off as leaves shed from trees in autumn." On hearing this I also became tearful and this emotively induced the audience to weep. This emotionally atmosphere kept going for a long while.

At last the Principal said to me, "Where does the chain of transmission of your Order culminate in?" I threw light on all my spiritual links beginning from the Holy Prophet ﷺ and reaching up to my preceptor Pir Ghulab Habib رحمه الله, the

Global Shaykh. The Principal delightfully uttered the words “Praise be to Allah” and asked me if he could also fit in with this sublime Order. I said,” Why not?” He told me, “Please accept me as your disciple and give me the devotional exercises and formulas of the Order. I have reached the end of my life. Though I am weak and emaciated, I will try to abide by the devotional exercises.” At this the administrator expressed the same desire. Gradually the whole audience joined the sublime Order and got pinpointed the Essence of *Qalb* (Heart).

The Principal, after staying with us for some time, went home and we walked in the madresah. The students had already been informed about me and they insisted that I should make a discourse. I spoke on the topic of piety and the audience got wonder-struck when they listened to me. After the discourse was over the whole gathering took the initiatic oath. I thanked God that He made me able enough to transmit the spiritual outpouring of the Global Shaykh to the Quarter of Pious Men. A Persian poet has rightly observed.

ایں سعادت بزور بازو نیست

تا نہ بخشد خدائے بخشندہ

“One cannot earn this favour with effort, unless the Munificent God Himself bestows it.”

Visit to Marki

After the meditation we took leave of the *Nazim* and heavy-heartedly exchanged goodbyes with the ulema and students. Islam has such an unparalleled degree of magnetism that the intense love which it spawns in hearts makes all family and blood relationships pale into insignificance. Some students showed their keenness to visit Pakistan and stay with me for purpose self-edification. Seven of them indeed put their word into action in the coming days.

Setting out from the madresah we reached Amir Timur's country residence which was situated in a locality called Marki. The locality was part of Jambol state. In the neighborhood of the village was the factory area and most of the villagers worked in these factories. Amir Timur had already given invitation to his relatives who all of them joined the fold of the Naqshbandiah Order. After the noon Prayer I delivered a sermon in the principal mosque of Marki. Maulana Zulqarnain and Imam Abdul Majeed became very fond of me. Thereafter we visited Amir Timur's house where one of his close relatives said to me, "Ever since Amir Timur became your disciple he has changed a lot and now he wants to stop the university education of the fine arts." I told him to put a direct question to Amir Timur regarding this matter. Amir Timur exploded into a volcanic way and said. "Hazrat, we have destroyed our life and youth so far and earned nothing except black deeds to our disillusionment. I pursue a

course of painting in the fine arts department but in our universities no stone is left unturned to lead youths astray and to cut off their religious roots. Boys and girls are lodged in the same room, so much so that they have latrines at the same place in hostels. They share the same bathroom, if a girl is taking a bath. A boy awaits his turn outside. Both the genders wash their clothes at the same place and are served meals at the same dining table. Sexual promiscuity is the salient feature of their academic life. Neither the parents feel concerned about their offspring, nor does anybody else carp at them. Now please tell me why shouldn't the satanic pursuits flourish?"

The fine arts department which imparts training to students, in the art of painting, presupposes them to gain sufficient skill in drawing pictures of wide-ranging scenery as well as those of men and animals. On the occasion of the annual examination a girl is selected who strips off all her clothes before all the students and lies on a table. The students are supposed to draw her picture within fifteen minutes and she changes her pose after every fifteen minutes so that four or five pictures may be drawn. You tell me please if an undressed female remains before the eyes of a man for two hours, will her image not creep into his imagination later? Again the best picture drawn by a student is decorated on the walls of the fine arts department and this practice has copiously studded the walls with the naked pictures. Many a

time the Muslim students have suggested that this practice should be stopped. But the teachers say that for it they receive instructions from the higher authorities. In fact this is being done deliberately so that all the sense of shame and modesty should be plucked out from within the students. The Communists consider religion as their most formidable enemy and they have learnt from experience that the man who becomes shameless goes to morbid extremes in his aversion for religion." I interrupted him to say that fourteen centuries ago our beloved Prophetﷺ had observed.

اذا فاتک الحیاء اعمل ما شئت

> *"When your modesty dies out, you may do whatever you like.*

Abu Uthman said, "Hazrat, Amir Timur should immediately give up this education, and instead get religious education and serve the cause of religion. Allah will take care of him and He shall provide his subsistence." When I looked towards Amir Timur's relative, the sense of shame was written large on his face. He told me, "It is indeed true that the Communists went to extreme to wipe out all traces of religion. In the vicinity of our locality there is a winery. The factory employees, according to the government rule, should be given one-month bonus after every six months, yet they are given the wine bottles worth the two times pay. Now it depends on their sweet will whether to drink or sell them. After every six months, there are, consequently, heaps of

wine-bottles even in the homes of the Muslim workers. All this is designed to turn people into alcohol addicts and to inject into their life aversion to religion." After having heard this Amir Timur said, "Now we have got freedom and it devolves upon us to consecrate our youth to the service of the religion and I am ready for that." I observed, "May Allah increased your enthusiasm and accept you to the service of the religion." The meeting was wound up by my prayers and then we went to bed.

Brainless Ram

Next day we were scheduled to have our breakfast with the headman of Amir Timur's village. On reaching their after *Ashraq* (post-sunrise Prayer), we came to know that the host had slaughtered a ram and its roast meat had been laid on the table. When we began to eat, the host put before me a plate containing the roasted head of the ram. Amir Timur told me that it was a local custom to honour a guest in this manner. I cut a part of it and ate it. I thought in my mind that I should open the skull and take out its brains. Sharp knives were lying on the table. I eagerly cut up the ram's skull but was disappointed to find just a nominal quantity of the brains, it seemed as if the ram was 'brainless'.

MEDICINE-FREE LIFE

We were still sitting at the table when a very aged man came to see me. He was about ninety but had robust health with freshness on his face. I made him sit beside me. After a while I felt that the old may, instead of eating the roast meat, was eating the fatty pieces of meat. Fearing cholesterol's rise I was totally avoiding the fat and was eating only the fat-free slices of meat. But the old man was picking out the fatty pieces of meat and eating them with relish. Then he took a spoon and began to have spoonfuls of the melted fat from beneath the meat and gulp it down. He put a piece of meat into his mouth and gulped it down with a spoonful of the melted fat. Now I could no more restrain my self and remain silent. I told Amir Timur to ask the old man whether he was suffering from some disease. He replied that he was over 90 and he had never been to a doctor4 or hospital. "What is more, I have never taken any sort of medicine in my whole life", he added. To be sure no harm can occur to one who is protected by God.

Grand Mufti of Jambol

On July 9 it was Thursday when we reached the main mosque of Jambol at the time of the noon Prayer. The mosque's caretaker, Abdur Rahman, gave vent to feelings of unusual love and devotion. While talking to me he divulged that one of his daughters lived at Ghujdawan. He had gone

there to see his daughter that he happened to listen to my discourse. He had also taken the initiatory oath but on account of a large crowd he was unable to sit with me or introduce himself to me. But he was extremely happy when he saw me in his mosque. Abdur Rahman led us into the guest-room of the mosque and entertained us with tea. In the mean time the Grand Mufti of Jambol also reached there. Abdur Rahman had good word to say about me while introducing me to the Mufti. He also gave an eyewitness account of what had occurred in the Gijdawan meeting. What particularly impressed the Grand Mufti was Abdur Rahman's firsthand report of the ulema's initiation into the Order and their devotional attitude towards me.

Abdur Rahman expressed the desire that we should stay in his house annexe reserved for guests. The Grand Mufti was kind enough to permit him, saying that he would like to carry us in his vehicle. Accordingly, he gave us a ride to the house of Abdur Rahman. The Grand Mufti, along with all the worshippers, took the initiatory oath at my hands following the night sermon. After identifying *Latifa-i-Qalb* (Essence of the Heart) to them I instructed them to practice the exercises and formulas of the Order. When the sitting was over the Mufti requested me to deliver tomorrow's Friday sermon. I agreed to that.

Problem – Solving Face

Next day, following the morning Prayer, Abdur Rahman said to me, "The Friday Prayer is offered in our mosque at 1 pm but worshippers start coming from ten o' clock in the morning. The internal hall of the mosque gets crowded at 11 am and all sides of the mosque are filled with worshippers up to twelve noon. Latecomers have to offer Prayer on the pathways and roads." I asked him, "Why do worshippers go to the mosque three hours earlier?" He told me, "Every worshipper performs *Salatit Tasbih* (a non-obligatory Prayer). Those who are conversant with Qur'aan reading, recite Surah Al-Kahf (The Cave). The Imam recites Sura Al-Kahf through the loudspeaker and all the worshippers are blessed enough to listen to it." Suchy a particularity about the reading and hearing of Surah Al-Kahf on Friday is unheard-of.

On getting free from the requisite preparation for the Friday Prayer we got into the mosque at about twelve noon and saw that it was totally jam-packed, it was indeed kind of Abdur Rahman that he had left some space in the first row for the guests. Early arrival in the mosque made us relish the Qur'aan recitation and utterances of Allah's praises as well as the wait for the Prayer. At 1 pm I made the discourse and the Grand Mufti interpreted me.

After the Prayer a sitting was held for bay'ah and Allah's remembrance. Later I described the exercises and formulas of the Order in detail. Grand Mufti Ali Heydar

whispered in my ear that a city divine who had stayed in Saudi Arabia for some period of time, bitterly opposed Tasawwuf (Sufism) under the Saudi influence of nonconformism, and he had just entered the mosque. When the meditation was over, I met some people as well as the nonconformist. He asked me whether I made people follow me or the Sunnah. I told him that our redemption lay in treading the path of the Sunnah. At this he told me whether the exercises and formulas in which I instructed my disciples were related to my personal opinion or were authenticated by Hadith. I told him that it was something rooted in both Qur'aan and Hadith. He said, "We also read the Qur'aan. But where do we find such reference in it?" I told him, "You do read but you don't understand it, if you read it sensibly, you would not make such an irrelevant question." The poor nonconformist looked to be an embodiment of confusion and astonishment. He asked me, "Where is the Qur'aanic injunction on meditation." I quoted the following Verse.

واذكر ربك في نفسك تضرعا وخيفة

"And remember they sustainer within thyself humbly and with awe........(7: 205).

Asked him, "Tell me, whether or not *remember* is an imperative case?" He replied in the affirmative. I asked him, "What is the meaning of '*within thyself*'?" "In the heart", was his reply. I told him, "This very remembrance in the heart was called meditation." The nonconformist asked me how I

would justify "Awareness of Heart" remembrance. I told him that God has said,

فاذکروا اللہ قیاما وقعودا وعلی جنوبکم

"Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and (lying) on all sides. (3.190)

I said, "Awareness of Heart means that we should remember Allah in all positions and all situations, whether sitting, standing or lying." The nonconformist divine said, "Now it is all right. All my ambiguities and doubts are resolved." The Grand Mufti smilingly told him that he should also join discipleship. He agreed to it. After getting him initiated, I explained to him the way of sitting in meditation. Maulana Abdullah was overjoyed at it and told me.

اے لقائے تو جواب ہر سوال
با تو مشکل حل شود بے قیل و قال

"Looking at you is the answer to every question. You resolve every problem without resorting to discursive argument.

Atheist Girl Adopts Islam

A Russian girl, career engineer, lived in Abdul Rahman's neighborhood. After breakfast he told me, "Hazrat, there is a young atheist girl. Hardly any other girl is a match for her beauty or intelligence. She holds Communist views.

We have employed all weapons to win her over to the side of religion but she never lets herself be hedged in by the force of any logic. My daughters desire that you should give her sometime. She has command over the English language and is ready to have a talk with you as well." I okayed the idea. After a little while the girl came. I told her to sit down wrapped in a chador and put any question she likes. First she introduced herself in detail. Her conversation indicated that she was proud of her engineering. Then she asked me to introduce myself in detail. I briefly talked about myself from my academic period to my engineering career. The Russian girl was taken aback and asked me again and again if I had computer experience in reality. When I gave its detail she said she was very fortunate that she was talking to a personality whose knowledge combined both secular and religious dimensions. When I wanted to know her views about religion she said that she believed in Darwin's theory. I gave her a brief lecture and tried to explain the creation of the universe in the light of Qur'aanic injunctions and scientific facts. She raised some objections to which I gave satisfactory answers. After about an hour's conversation she showed her intention of embracing Islam.

Abdur Rahman's household burst into weeping. I gave her my kerchief as a gift which she instantly put on her head like a veil. After uttering *kalimah* (Testimony of Faith) the Russian girl asked me if I would like to go with her for a walk

in the evening. I explained to her the requirements of purdah and said that it was not possible. She said, "All right, can I dine with you? Abdur Rahman said, "We shall hold a feat tonight. You will take meal along with all the women and the Shaykh will be dining with the men." She accepted the proposal. While departing she wept and said, "Your arrival at this place has brought me a great boon. You are my benefactor. I can never forget you all through my life." Then she put some questions about my conjugal life and in the end said, "How lucky will be the woman who was blessed with a husband like you." I said, "No, rather I am so lucky a husband who was graced with such a pious wife." She said, "I wish to see your wife." I said, "The meeting will take place somehow, God willing. Even if it does not happen in this world, it is inevitable in paradise by the grace of God." Later I instructed her in the fundamentals of the religion of Islam. After about three hours the meeting was dispersed. Abdur Rahman, quoting her daughter, told me that the Russian girls was feeling so happy after her conversion to Islam that she had never undergone such an exhilarating experience in her whole life. I said, "May Allah bless her with material and non-material happinesses in her future life as well." As we were already too late, we set out to visit madresahs of Jambol city. At night we had dinner with Abdur Rahman and set off for Cham-kant next day.

Stay at Cham-Kant

It was Sunday when we reached Cham-kant, it is a big city which stands on the border between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. It has a Medical College where students from Pakistan also study. We stayed at the principal mosque of the city. I made a discourse following the sunset Prayer. Two friends, Mr. Muslim and Mr. Abdul Majeed, came in the fold of the Naqshbandiah Order. Mr. Abdul Majeed, an engineer had two houses, one at Cham-kant and one at Tashkent. He held a sumptuous feast in our honour.

Qazi Baizavi's Tomb

Mr. Abdul Majeed proposed to visit Madina-tul-Baiz'a after *Asr* Prayer. Famous Qur'aanic exegete Qazi Baizavi lies buried in this village. Hundreds of ulema were born in the city of Cham-kant but the name of Qazi Baizavi spread its fame.

Qazi Baizavi was an erudite scholar of his time. Once the post of Qazi fill vacant and he keenly aspired in his heart that it should be assigned to him. The ruler of the time was a devotee of an adept Shaykh. The Qazi thought that if he succeeded in getting a letter of recommendation from the Shaykh and bared his heart to him. In response to his heartfelt desire the Shaykh wrote down a chit for the ruler. The result was that the Qazi was given the desired post by the ruler. After a long time the two were sitting together and engaged in

conversation. Incidentally a reference was dropped to the graciousness of the Shaykh. Thereupon the ruler took out that chit which read, "The bearer of this chit is a good man. He wants a prayer-carpet's space in hell. Kindly extend cooperation to him."

These words came as a thunderbolt to the Qazi and a tremendous change came over his heart. His passion for the world instantly dried up and was replaced with an avalanching thought of the hereafter. The result was that he wrote an Exegesis of the Qur'aan, Tafsir-e-Baizavi, which was immensely admired by ulema.

While returning Mr. Abdul Majeed took us to a place were Khawjah Ahmed Yassavi's parents are buried. After sending up prayers to benefit their souls we came back to Cham-kant. Our taxi driver was a hard-line atheist. On the way he get into an argument with Maulana Abdullah and Abu Uthman flew into rage and they were likely to come to blows with the driver. When I asked Maulana Abdullah he laid bare the matter to me. I said, "Maulana, both of you keep silent and let me talk to the man. You are to simply interpret me. For a while I talked to him and simultaneously focused my mental attention on his heart. He silently kept listening to me and later he voiced his objections to which I responded with utmost patience. He got much satisfied and was lost in deep thought for a ' ›ng while. At last he told Maulana Abdullah softly, "This man has completely nonplussed me. I am so

tongue-tied that I am unable to argue any more." The Maulana told him to embrace Islam. He said, "I have accepted it from my heart but will proclaim it after some time. I have so far been a bitter opponent of Islam. Now it is difficult for me to call myself a Muslim all of a sudden. I told him to pronounce the Testimony of Faith (*Kalimah*) without letting anybody know it." He said that such things hardly remained hidden. I told him that such opportunities were not available all the time either. He uttered the two Testifications of Faith (There is no deity but Allah, Mohammad is His Messenger) and Maulana Abdullah and Abu Uthman became tearful. All the three got down from the taxi and embraced each other in so hearty a manner as if they were bosom friends. The Maulana said, "Hazrat, your existence is a great boon to us." I said, "Maulana, may Allah mould me according to your presumption. I have no claim to any excellence. The credit goes indeed to the light of *Nisbat (Essence-line)* which softens up even stones."

Next day we reached Tourism Hotel of Tashkent, I gave a three-day leave to Maulana Abdullah and Abu Uthman so that they may go round to their homes and turn back. In the meantime, in coordination with Abbas Khan, I chalked out a plan with full preparation for a visit to Moscow.

CHAPTER 6

TRIP TO RUSSIA

On 17 July 1992 an aeroplane took us off from Tashkent and landed at the Moscow airport. Our group consisted of four members and all of them belonged to different countries. I was from Pakistan, Maulana Abdullah from Tajikistan, Abu Uthman from Uzbekistan and Amir Timur from Kazakhstan. When the matter of checking the passports came up the relevant official got surprised at it. He took our passports and entered a room to take up the matter with his boss. We kept waiting for twenty minutes till he turned up. While sitting in his seat he asked us how we the four people with different territorial backgrounds became friends. I replied that I had come from Pakistan to visit the tombs of the Naqshbandiah Order's Shaykhs and I needed a companion to interpret me. One by one I came across these interpreters from four countries. Then we thought that we should pay a visit to Moscow as well and the zeal of tourism brought us here. He

said, "After how many days you will turn up?" I said, "After about a month." He stamped our passports letting us enter the departure lounge. Maulana Abdullah asked me whether we had come here with the intention of touring. I said, "Maulana, we have to furnish these atheistic people with a comprehensible reply. Otherwise the Qur'aan says,

قل سيروا فى الارض فانظروا كيف كان عاقبة المكذبين

'Say: Go about journeying the earth and behold the end of those who gave the lie (to the Truth) (6:11)

While talking I had this Qur'aanic Verse in my mind. After travelling across Russia we shall witness the tragic situation of Communists and at the same time call them to Islam. It dawned upon the Maulana that ulema saw things in their true and total perspective, indeed.

Alcoholic Ravages

After passing through the passports checking process we received our luggage. Thereafter we lined up before customs people. They checked up our luggage so minutely as if each of its items was a rarity and luckily an opportunity had been made available to them to see it. However what could the bags of the fakirs offer. On being free from this hurdle we advanced towards the exit. At some distance I came across a young girl who was lying on the ground in a supine and semi-

nude position. I said to Maulana Abdullah, "This woman seems to be a patient. Perhaps she has collapsed after getting unconscious. Please ask anybody to remove her from the way and set her dress right." He told me, "Hazrat this girl has collapsed after overdrinking. Here nobody cares for her. When the influence goes out of her head she will herself get up and go home. On hearing this I was completely taken aback. Eiders say that a drunkard is that fool who spends money to earn self-humiliation. It is proverbially said that two things, addiction and friendship with a pious man, increase instead of decreasing. A drunkard, even if he is a millionaire, is sooner or later left with a starvation diet and ultimately overtaken by a moment when his stomach thirsts for food with a scantily-clad body. Here I should quote an Italian luminary, *"If there were no wine, half of human sins and diseases would have been non-existent."* That is why wine has been called as the mother of all evils. Drinking deprives man of reason and modesty, and all his ability to differentiate between sister, daughter and wife goes away. He hardly finds and indecency in abusive language and finally he remains no more able to call his soul his own. Truly speaking, drinking is more destructive than the fury of the sea, though one takes this metaphor in statistical terms. This explains why alcohol is a taboo in Islam.

Wretched State of Central Mosque

Coming out of the airport building we took a taxi and reached a nearby railway station. In Moscow the underground railway, called the Metro, is one of the most superior rail systems in the world. While travelling on the Metro we reached near the central mosque. We came out and started started walking towards the mosque. We had hardly walked a few steps when an ethnic Russian dashed to me and said. "Please give me your luggage. I'll carry it." Taking it cursorily, I rejected his offer. But that man stuck to us like glue. I walked quite a way but his insistence on carrying my luggage remained unflagging. At last he stopped on the way and began to say something in the Russian language. While quoting the man, Maulana Abdullah said, "Please let me carry the luggage. I am not demanding money for it." I told Maulana Abdullah, "All right, then why does he want to carry the luggage?" The man said, "I cannot express myself in words. But I shall feel happy to carry your luggage." I gave him some luggage. When he lifted the luggage he asked us if we wanted to go to the mosque. On our affirmative reply he told us, "You follow me. I'll take you there." When we reached the central mosque we learnt that the congregational Prayer was over. We performed our ablution afresh, and put up our own congregational Prayer.

In the meantime the worshippers kept looking at us closely. On getting free from Prayer I proposed to Maulana

Abdullah to see the Imam-Khateeb. When Maulana Abdullah got back after meeting the Imam he said, "The Imam-Khateeb of this mosque is a clean-shaven man. He is wearing a necktie and also has a turban on his head. Besides the noon Prayer which is offered daily, only the Friday Prayer is offered in this mosque. There is no arrangement for any other congregational Prayer, instead the mosque is locked. When Maulana Abdullah wanted to know why the rest of Prayers were not led by him, the Imam-Khateeb said, "My duty hours are from 1 am to 3 pm during which the time of the noon Prayer occurs. After leading this Prayer my responsibility ends." Seeking "Allah's forgiveness"(استغفراللہ) in loud voice Maulana Abdullah came to me and said, "Hazrat, let me open my heart to you. I have a feeling that this Imam has Communistic leanings and he has been deputed here by the government. The legality of our Prayers behind him will be questionable. Moreover, our stay in this mosque is not possible because it remains locked from 3 pm to 7 am. However not far from here is a historical mosque where five-time congregational Prayers are regularly prayed. We may go there if you agree." The neglected state of the central mosque against its structural beauty distressed my heart and I showed my willingness to go to the historical mosque.

Stay in Historical Mosque

When we reached the historical mosque we came to know that there was a thickly populated Muslim quarter in its neighborhood. In this 150-year old Mosque an Imam regularly leads five-time obligatory Prayers as well as the Friday Prayer. On the occasion of 1917 Revolution the Communists had shot dead 14 people including the Imam and his household. After some time a printing press was installed in the building of the mosque. The beautiful tiles of its interior portion were removed and fitted in the railway station building. After the disintegration of Soviet empire the mosque was rebuilt. It is so close to the Kremlin building that the muezzin's call to Prayer through the loudspeaker can reach up to the pagan corridors of power.

When we entered the mosque we learnt that a preaching party from England had already arrived there. On seeing us two of their members came forward and carried our luggage into a small room inside the mosque. It was the time of mid-afternoon Prayer. We performed our ablutions and joined the worshippers. When the Prayer was over they requested me to make a brief discourse. I complied with the request. The news that a Sufi Shaykh was staying in the mosque went round the neighboring quarter like the fire of the jungle. A string of visitors came in. When the preaching group members greeted any newcomer his ready utterance was that

he simply wanted to see the Shaykh. The unceasing inflow of visitors, so to say, snowballed into a considerable gathering.

People sought the journey account from Maulana Abdullah and he related his impressions and observations with relish. Our preacher-friends kept observing the traffic of visitors with a sense of awe-stricken quietness. After next day's noon Prayer I received word from their leader that I should spare some time for his group companions as well. I said that I would happily do that. Accordingly they called on me after the evening Prayer and made me an offering. I thought that in response to their expression of love I should offer them "the outpouring of the Heart." Consequently I focused my attention on them. Their group leader told me that all his companions were eager to listen to my exhortation. In compliance with his request I made a discourse on the cleansing of the Heart and internal purity. The topic became so interesting and moving that the majority of the audience burst into weeping. After the sermon's delivery the group leader told me that his companions wanted to enter into an initiatic pact with me. So I made all of them utter the initiatory words and later they were instructed in the method of Allah's remembrance and meditation. One of them said to me, "Hazrat, the effect of spiritually has been witnessed by us with our physical eyes. We have been staying in this mosque for three days. And during this time we have made several rounds of the vicinity and contacted

people individually. But the people who have taken oath of repentance at your hands during the twenty-four hours far exceed in number." I said that here I would like to quote the late Maulana Muhammad Ilyas. "If you make strivings for people's improvement in a small way, do hundred times more for self-improvement."

Another fellow said, "Hazrat, we do our best to remember Allah but our effort Bears only impermanent effects which are shorn of depth." I told him, "A self-acquired remembrance of Allah is of little benefit. It has to be practised after being instructed by someone." Once at a Raiwind gathering I heard Mufti Zayn-ul-Abideen say this, "Unless you practice Allah's remembrance after taking it from some Shaykh, all your preaching effort will end up in fruitless drudgery."

The audience unanimously said that they had taken Allah's remembrance from me for that reason alone. "I am at your service", I humbly submitted. The sitting was long enough till we made a collective prayer and supplication to Allah and then went to sleep.

Find of Fourth Jewel

We were preparing ourselves for lunch after Sunday's noon Prayer that a handsome young man holding a water-bottle in this hand entered the mosque. As soon as I saw him I spontaneously said, "You are late to bring me water." He

smilingly embraced me and said, "Let me tell you a strange thing." I said, "All Right." He told me, "First I would like to introduce myself. My name is Ravil Tajuddin. For years I worked in the Air Force. Currently I am interested in Photography and correspondence. On Friday I was going to the central mosque that I saw you going your way on the way with luggage. Meanwhile a man of Russian descent approached you with entreaties to carry your luggage, as he did and led you to the mosque. I kept walking along with you while closely observing your bodily movements. I have never seen a Russian who would be so courteous to anybody as he was to you. Instantly I took it in my mind than you must be an extraordinary personality and I must contact you after the Prayer. When I finished my Prayer you had gone. I asked people about you but none gave me a satisfactory answer. I was so sorry for being unable to meet you that I could not have a peaceful sleep at night. I had a busy time on Saturday. I made up my mind today that I would pray the noon Prayer in the historical mosque. On the way a man was selling water-bottles and I purchased one from him. I thought in my mind that if I had met you, I would have gifted you this water bottle. When I entered the mosque, you uttered at the very sight of me, 'You are late to bring me water.' I am surprised how you have said this thing. However your love has sunk into my heart."

When Maulana Abdullah described in Russian to Ravil Tajuddin some of the events relating to the journey of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, he requested me to initiate him into the way. So I made him utter the words of the initiatory oath. This young man of the Tartarian descent became the first apprentice of the Moscow-based group. Allah made him a good vehicle for the spread of the Order.

Acceptance through Rejection

Adjacent to the historical mosque stood a guest-house and the Khatib-Imam office where a woman was employed. She heard people talk about me and a thought came into her mind that she should send her young son to the mosque So that he may also take to the right path. So much seductions and temptations prevail in Moscow that carefree youths can hardly resist them. To them the mosque atmosphere seems to be just suffocative. The woman contacted Maulana Abdullah and she was told by his that she should send her son to the Mosque after the noon Prayer.

After the noon Prayer we were talking about moral and exhortative things when a handsome young man entered the mosque and sat in the gathering. When the Discourse was over the young man introduced himself in English, "I am getting Computer education. I know the English language and like English ways and Manners. My name is Alder. I am leading a comfortable and luxurious life. My Mother works in

the Khateeb's office. Urged on by her I have come here. I want to become good but not exceedingly good. Looking at you I fear that my heart will come under the spell of your advice, and lest I should stop meeting all my girlfriends. So I will visit you for a day or two but I can't get closer to you." I was laughing at him in my heart and his simplicity also surprised me. After listening to his story I told him, "True, persuaded by your mom, you have come here. But you can't leave at will. God has brought you here under some purpose. Your intention is not involved in it."

After listening to my exhortation the young man said, "Shall I become pious in Reality? Please tell me how shall I be able to get on with my girlfriends?" I replied: "When you enter into friendship with the Greatest, none other will matter in your sight. The lock of a Beauty will appear to you like the tail of the donkey. Then you will be singing in low tones:

کوئی جی بھرنے کی صورت ہی نہیں میرے لئے
کیسے دنیا بھر کے ہوجائیں حسیں میرے لئے
اب تو ذوقِ حسن اپنا یوں کئے ہو کر بلند
حسن اوروں کیلئے حسن آفریں میرے لئے

"Howsoever may be the world beauty pageant for me, unfortunately, I am left with no option of going free with my soul."

"Now my heightened sense of beauty tells me that beauty is for others while the Creator of beauty is for me.

Getting somewhat embarrassed the young man told me, "I am afraid my heart is poised to change and I will really become pious." I told him, "What do you want? He said, "I want to become good but no overwhelmingly good." I asked him, "What do you mean by overwhelmingly good." He said, "I will simply offer my Prayers but without desisting from my Girlfriends." I said to him, "I tell you some devotional words to intone as a regular Practice. This will give you peace of mind." He said that he did not want to bring any devotional formula under his regular practice lest he should become a man of religious commitment. I said with a sense of exasperation, "All right, my friend. Sit in meditation." I said, "We shall just do it before your eyes." He said, "All right." During the meditation when I acted upon his heart he started swinging out of exhilaration uttering Allah's Name aloud. When the meditation was over, he told me, "A light has, so is my feeling, flowed out of your chest and penetrated into my chest. Now I feel coolness in my chest. Please administer the oath of discipleship to me?", I said, "I don't accept you as my disciple." When he wanted to know the reason I told him that first he would have to give up his friendships. He said, "I am feeling such peace in my heart that now it has become easy for me to give up every thing for the sake of Allah." So he

was given the initiatory oath. Allah took out of him a wonderful job for the cause of the religion and many youths, both male and female, reformed their ways, thanks to his efforts. Later whenever he met me, I would smilingly utter the following line to tickle his sense of humour:

نہ نہ کرتے کرتے پیار کر بیٹھے

"You kept refusing, yet came under the spell of love.

To it he would respond in Russian language which we turn in English, *"Only the Will of God prevails."*

I told his mother that her son was young and she had better get him married soon and consequently he was wedded to a girl who was professionally a qualified medical doctor. On their casual visits to me the husband would relate to his wife the incident of his initiation with a sense of relish. "Allah has given me peace of mind ever since I repented of love affairs with the fair sex. Now I pray day and night that I should become a committed Muslim."

Sadhu Embraces Islam

On 19 July 1992 I wanted to make a phone call to Pakistan after the dawn Prayer and this required me top go to the Central Exchange of Moscow. Phoning abroad had been made quite an arduous job by the former Communist regime of Russia. Under this procedure you book a call and then after

a day's break the operator informs you of the time and date of visiting the exchange so as to let you talk to the person concerned on the telephone. That was indeed a device to watch over every call without exception so that one should not be able to divulge state secrets to the outside world.

On our entry to the Exchange hall we saw small cabins on its both sides. Tables of about ten to twelve operators were laid on the one side and those wanting to book a call stood in a line before them. When the turn of anybody came the operator connected his call and told him to go to such and such cabin to have the telephonic talk with the relevant person. Our Pakistani friend Mohammad Ashraf told me, "Hazrat, please have a chair in the waiting-room and let me stand in the Line. I'll call you in the cabin when the call is connected. I sat on chair while all other chairs were already occupied by people. If a Muslim wants to escape glancing at a woman in Russia, he should advisably avoid looking at the faces of men as well. If anyone thinks that he may look at men to the preclusion of women, it is just out of question. He will inevitably look at women, only a man with well-disciplined, down-cast eyes can avoid staring at the fair sex. One who is in the habit of peeping about amorously can hardly abstain from ogling at women.

When I saw the Russian people all around, I thought it was expedient that I should shut my eyes in meditation. Thus I would be able, I thought, to pass my time peacfully and also

keep my glances in check. Hardly a few minute had passed in meditation that I felt as if someone, sitting close to me, was acting upon my heart. I took it a momentary thing for a while, but I was feeling the impact of psychic transmissions. I opened my eyes in surprise and saw that a young Sadhu, sitting on a nearby chair with closed eyes, was directing his psychic force to me. He opened his eyes when I did the same. He simply smiled in response when I asked him by gesture as to what he was doing. I called Maulana Abdullah to tell him that the young Sadhu was doing a mischief and that he should try to ferret out his whereabouts. When questioned he said to Maulana Abdullah, "I am an inhabitant of Czechoslovakia. I practise Krishna-type meditation and have about one hundred young disciples. I am on a visit to Moscow along with my wife. I saw this man sitting here and thought that I should act upon his heart. But he has given me such an attention that now I feel divested of all my psychic power. Please ask this man as to why he as robbed away my vision and inner states." Maulana Abdullah disclosed everything to me and I told him as the attack had first come from the sadhu, I was justified to put up my defence. He started entreating Maulana Abdullah to win over his help in the matter. I said to Maulana Abdullah, "Tell the young Sadhu that we are staying in the mosque, and if he agrees to go with us, we shall be able to have satisfactory talk." When he told me that his wife was also with him, I said, "Take her with you as well." In the

meantime my call was connected to Pakistan and for a few minutes I talked to my family on the telephone to enquire about their welfare.

On being detached from the telephone we started towards the historical mosque and both the guru and his wife followed us too. We made them sit in a cell close to the mosque. After taking our breakfast I told Maulana Abdullah that the young man should be called to the religion. The first hurdle to be encountered was that he knew only Czech and it was not even possible to talk to him in Russian. I told Maulana Abdullah to query whether his wife knew the Russian language. To it she replied in the affirmative. The second hurdle was that Maulana knew Uzbek and Arabic languages but lacked the command of Russian. So Abdu Uthman was called. The arrangement was made in this way that I talked in Arabic, Maulana Abdullah interpreted it in Russian and finally the guru's wife interpreted it in Czech. In this series of interpreters I am at a loss to say as to what extent the real meanings were communicated to the guru. However, a little while after the talk the young sadhu again attempted to act upon my heart. I told him, "O friend, now you may exert your fullest efforts, but I tell you one thing that in spiritual chain I am linked up with adept Sufi masters. After saying this I came out of the cell. Yet the sadhu kept sitting in the same position for eight hours. At last his wife told him, "When this man has divested you of all your

psychic powers and the toil of eight hours has failed to restore them to you. Why don't you become his disciple?"

When the sadhu expressed his willingness, his wife summoned Maulana Abdullah and told him that both of then wanted to enter discipleship of the Shaykh. The Maulana said that the acceptance of Islam was prerequisite to it. "We are ready for it", she said. The Maulana was overjoyed to hear it. I asked Maulana to tell them that they should take bath and then they would be instructed in *Kalimah Shahadah* (Testimony of Faith) in the mosque.

When after taking bath the guru's wife came out of the bathroom, Maulana Abdullah gave her a white kerchief to cover her head. She wrapped it in the form of hijab in such a way that he was astonished to see it. While she entered the Mosque, the khatib reached there too. This woman and her husband, he was told, both wanted to embrace Islam. Impressed by this inspiring news the Khatib uttered aloud, "Allah is Great." I made the two utter *Kalimah* (Testimony of Faith) and explained to them the fundamentals of Islam. They expressed their keenness about travelling along with me. In my company they made a journey From Moscow to Leningrad. The young sadhu told me, "I will write letters to my Disciples that the Creator has shown me light, and you should also become Muslim. I will stand exonerated on the Day of Judgment." Thus began a sadhu's Journey من الظلمات الى النور from darkness to light.

Historic Event

When the Arya Samaj Movement (a Hindu revivalist movement in pre-partition days) gained momentum in India, writes Maulana Mohammad Zakariya, Hindu yogis and pundits spread out in villages and began to hinduise simple and illiterate Muslims. Prompted by the delicacy of the moment the Deoband ulema decided to play their role in wiping out the mischief. They sent a message to the Hindus proposing to have a debate over the issue so as to vindicate the truth. Arguing with the simple-minded Muslim folks, they said, and attempting to dissuade them from their religion through dubious tactics carried no sense. The Hindus accepted the challenge under the condition that at the start of the debate their guru and pundits would sit in the first row of the audience. The ulema accepted the condition. Such a huge multitude assembled to listen to the debate that the venue was packed to its capacity.

A Hindu pundit kicked off the debate by making a passionate and bombastic speech in favour of his religion. In response to it when a Muslim speaker began his speech it betrayed an embarrassed and incoherent way of expression. His heart and brain seemed to be overawed by an uncanny influence. This spectacle spurred up the valour and excitement of Hindu audience. From the Muslim audience a man rose to his feet and went behind the stage where Maulana Khalil Saharanpuri (a great divine of the era) was

sitting with a heap of books around him so as to instantly present a relevant book in case a need arose to quote a reference. The man told the Shaykh that the Muslim speaker seemed like a frightened and terror-stricken cow standing before a lion. Maulana Saharanpuri got into meditation in the same sitting position and saw in his vision that the Hindu Pundits sitting in the front row of the audience were exerting their psychic influence on the Muslim speakers, and the most active agent was a young sadhu wearing orange-coloured garments. The shaykh acted on the sadhu's heart and he felt as if his body was burning. Consequently, he went outside in an agitated and restless state of mind. On the heels of his departure the Muslim speaker regained self-possession and he made such a convincing and impressive speech that the Hindus had to give in. Following the end of this debating contest all the sadhus left for their homes with drawn faces. The historic event reduced the pundits to low spirits, bringing the Arya Samaj Movement to its logical end. As says the Qur'aan,

بل نقذف بالحق على الباطل فيد مغه فاذا هوا ذاهق

"Nay, but (by the very act of creation) we hurl the truth against falsehood, and it crushes the later. And look! It withers away." (21:18)

The truthfulness of the religion of Islam is evident like the shining sun and disbelievers cannot face the Truth-oriented people. A believer's spiritual attention of a single

moment strikes the harvest of falsehood like lightning. It gives me surprise that the spiritual attentions of a Sufi sometimes wipe out the toil done by sadhus for years and change their inner world. A poet says:

اغیار کے قدموں میں قلندر نہیں گرتا
ٹوٹے جو ستارہ تو زمیں پر نہیں گرتا
گرتے ہیں سمندر میں بڑے شوق سے دریا
لیکن کسی دریا میں سمندر نہیں گرتا

"A calendar never throws himself at the feet of others. A disintegrating star never falls on the earth.

The rivers go rushing into the sea but the sea never flows into a river."

Historic Sermon

Maulana Abdullah was over joyed at the sadhu's conversion to Islam. He gave a detailed report of it to Maulana Mahmud, Imam-Khateeb of the mosque, and also related to him with relish what had taken place at Samarkand and Bukhara. I agreed to the request of the Khateeb to deliver the Friday sermon. The mosque was jam packed with worshippers when I discoursed in Arabic on the subject of the Qur'aan's grandeur. The audience became awe-stricken when I spoke about the divine glory and the Khateeb who

interpreted me started weeping in a high-pitched voice. After the Friday Prayer the audience took the initiatory oath and when meditation and prayer were over Maulana Mahmud said to me, "Today you have delivered an historic sermon in this historical mosque. If only big loudspeakers had been fitted here your voice would have reached the Kremlin."

Acting upon the Kremlin

"At a short distance from the historical mosque", Maulana Mahmud said, "is the Russian seat of government called the Kremlin." People from far-off places come to see this building and you may also be shown round it if you like." I said, "All right, we will go." Accordingly, we took our meal after the Friday Prayer and set off to see the Kremlin. One had no words to describe the soul-eroding atmosphere of this place with overcrowding tourists. I told Maulana Abdullah, "You stand on some spot here and get engaged in talking as if you are in gossiping. I will perform meditation under your cover and act upon the hearts of Russian leaders. I want to impress on them the global dimension of Islam with an endeavour to dissuade them from indulging in anti-Muslim conspiracies. Maulana Abdullah said, 'Hazrat, this is what we need most here and this is indeed the real *Tasawwuf* (Sufism). When I was engaged in meditation a Hindu devotee of krishnaism came across that way and asked Maulana Abdullah what I was doing. I raised my head from meditation

and he slipped off at thee very sight of my face. Maulana Abdullah said, "Just shake hands with our shaykh." While walking away he refused by the gesture of his hand and said, "No, your guru is very powerful." Maulana Abdullah raised a hearty laugh and I thanked my Lord. According to a prophetic saying, "I was helped by being made awe-inspiring to others." What is more the prophet's awfulness preceded him by a month's space. What makes one's personality impressive and awesome is one of the benefits that accrue from the practice of Sunnah. It is in the same vein that the Poet of the East says:

نہ تاج و تخت میں نہ لشکر و سپاہ میں ہے
جو بات مرد قلندر کی بارگاہ میں ہے

"What we witness in a Calender's presence is hardly traceable in the crown and the throne or in the army and the soldiery."

Let's take it as a sure evidence of God's infinite power that a powerful seat of government avowedly kept denying His existence for seven decades. But a humble rotary of the Naqshbandiah Order, sitting at that very place, was spiritually concentrating on the hearts of people, thanks to the vicissitudes of time.

Find of Fifth Jewel

Just in front of the Kremlin's gate there stands a magnificent church which is considered a masterpiece of architectural beauty. It is conspicuously displayed in most of pictures. When we reached close to the church a handsome young man shook hand with us and asked what we were doing here. I told him first he should introduce himself. He said, "My name is Wadham. I belong to Ukraine. Some time back I came to Moscow. Standing at some distance for a while I kept gazing at you seated here. Then my heart told me this man has a charm and fascination of his own. I should have a meeting with him." I said to him, "I am an initiate of the Naqshbandiah Order. I practice the remembrance of Allah and make others do so as well." Wadham requested me to give him a lesson too. I told him to keep my company for a few days and he would learn to invoke the Name of Allah. He agreed and after having reached the mosque he took the initiatory oath.

I changed his name as Ibrahim Adham. Despite being of Russian descent he became a staunch Muslim and also the catalyst for a revolutionary change in scores of youths, both male and female. One day Ibrahim Adham became sentimental and told me, "Hazrat, please act upon the Kremlin bosses so forcefully that all of them may turn Muslim and Leningard may turn Muslim and Leningard should be changed by the name of Islamabad."

Departure for Leningrad

On July 20 at 11 pm we boarded a train which was to leave Moscow for Leningrad. In Russia the train system is popular with people, particularly for a long journey. Passengers are provided all comforts in a train which has comfortable and neat and clean seats. A supervisor is attached to each bogie to take care of passengers and this gives you the impression as if you are travelling in an aeroplane. There is no question of crowding to buy a ticket because every seat is already reserved. A train stops and moves in time, so much so that there is no delay even for a few minutes.

A journey continuing all through the night took us to Leningrad at 8 o' clock next morning .From the viewpoint of highways and tall, multi-storey buildings we could make no difference between Moscow and Leningrad. Our friend Mohammad Ashraf took us from the railway station to the central mosque of the city which had an architectural beauty of its own. When we were free from offering our non-obligatory cycles of Prayer I sent Maulana Abdullah to meet up with the Khateeb. On his return he told me, "The Khateeb seems to be the Government-installed man. He opens the mosque only for noon and mid-afternoon Prayers. There is only a space of a few feet between khateeb's house and the mosque but he doesn't allow anybody to unlock it for other Prayers." Maulana Abdullah also told me that he had dropped a word to him about me, particularly with reference to what

he had witnessed at Samarkand and Bukhara. But the Khateeb who seemed to be the least interested in all that, said only this, "You people cannot stay in the mosque, yet I tell the muezzin to open the guest-room for you." We shifted from the mosque to the guest-room. The noon Prayer was led by the deputy Khateeb. When the prayer was over the worshippers requested me to say a word of advice. I made a brief discourse and only two people got ready for *bay'ah* in the beginning. When the inaugural address was over and 1 came on pronouncing the repentance wording, all the worshippers grasped the chador and repeated the ritual phrases which I had uttered. While administering the oath of repentance this idea was repeatedly flirting across my mind that Leningrad was famous after the name of Lenin. A few years back it had been the centre of atheism and today, thank God, a humble votary of the Naqshbandiah Order was making his audience repeat the ritual phrases of repentance in the atmosphere of this city .The sitting was rounded off with meditation and prayer. Maulana Abdullah and Ibrahim Adham were sent by me to buy food but there was not a single Muslim shopkeeper in the whole city. I was of the opinion that fruit should be bought and eaten but instead they bought bread and butter which we ate with relish.

Sexual perversion is more rampant in Leningrad than in Moscow. This place is the focal point of God-disoriented people. Forces of darkness seemed to be prevalent all around

here. Taking up the line of Naqshbandiah Shaykhs I worked up my power of psychic concentration to work off the ill effects on human beings. The mosque was closed for morning, sunset and evening Prayers and consequently we spread chadors in front of its outer gate and offered our prayers in severe cold seeking Divine favour with lamentations.

One day a young Muslim saw us while walking on the road. He came near us and said, "Who are you?" Maulana Abdullah told him everything in detail. When he came to know that I guided people how to invoke the name of Allah, he expressed the desire to be initiated into the Sufi way. I made him utter the ritual phrases of repentance. Surprisingly he started weeping hysterically. Then rising to his feet he walked up to the mosque gate and put his forehead on its threshold with no cessation in his crying. Moved by his miserable state we wept for a long while too. I beseeched Allah to forgive my sins for the sake of this young man. This time was one of the most memorable moments of my life. To be sure, God's mercifulness is free from causes and conditions.

Nights of Leningrad

When the sunset Prayer was over we instantly got in the guest-room due to sever cold. Such a cold wind blew that as soon as we came out we were chilled to the bones. After having our dinner we put up our evening Prayer and went to

sleep. I got up after the hours and craned my neck outside and looked up at the sky to have an idea of time. It appeared that daybreak had begun and I feared that if the dawn prayer was not put up quickly it might be missed. I performed ablution and woke up my companions. Maulana Abdullah told me, "Hazrat, according to local prayer hours there are still seven hours to daybreak." I said, "Maulana, so much daylight has spread outside that even a book printed in small type can be read easily." The Maulana told me, "Hazrat, you won't see here dark nights. Even after sunset as sort of daylight does stay on the horizon." I told him that the appearance of stars across the sky, according to jurists, was a sign of the evening Prayer's time. The Maulana said to me, "Hazrat such a condition is not fulfilled in Leningrad. Immediately after sunset here you see the daybreak time. There are also some months in a year when, normally speaking, the time of the evening Prayer does not take effect." The Maulana replied in the affirmative when I asked him if the ulema really testified to it. "Then there is no question of offering the evening Prayer," Ravil Tajuddin spoke out. I told him, "Since the Holy Qur'aan mentions five Prayers we are bound to make up the number thereof. Even if the time of any Prayer apparently does not become operative we are supposed to offer it at the approximate time of the next Prayer so as to complete the total." Perceiving the confusion of Tajuddin I had to amplify my point.

Detail of Prayer Hours

Allah says in His Book,

ان الصلوة كانت على المؤمنين كتابا موقوتا

"Prayer at fixed hours has been enjoined on believers. (3:103)

There.are three possible forms of timing in the whole world. First, when the hours of five Prayers occur within day and night, we are under obligation to perform each Prayer at its time. The shortness of day and night does not make any difference. For example· if the day is of twenty hours and night four hours, the day is of four hours and the night twenty hour, or time is changing, including the Prayer hours, it is obligatory to us to put up each Prayer according to its time.

Second, the division of day and night may be in such a way that the time of any Prayer does not come under it. For example: if daybreak occurs after one hour of sunset, such a situation will preclude the time of the evening Prayer. This applies, so to say, to the inhabitants of Balghar which is an extremely cold city of Norway in the North Pole. At this place where the sun sets for an hour and the day stays for twenty-three hours, the time of the evening Prayer cannot be instituted. Yet the distinguished ulema are divided on it. Some are of the opinion that, according to the Qur'aan, Prayer hours are fixed. But since the time of any Prayer is far from operative, its obligatory position is questionable. Hence

only four Prayers are obligatory on the people of such a place. Arguably, if any person's two feet are mutilated up to ankles, there are only three ablution requisites for him because the fourth one will be dropped owing to his natural handicap. The second arguments is this that if a man embraced Islam after sunrise, or a minor grew adult, or a menstruating woman became free from her periods, all of them would be essentially required to perform only four Prayers that day. Most jurists hold this view. Now let us see the other side of the picture.

Other jurists believe that since the Qur'aan mentions five Prayers, we must not give up any Prayer. So if the time of the time of the evening (Isha) Prayer does not occur at any place the local people would be required to approximate time and offer it proportionately after the sunset Prayer. To be careful enough the evening Prayer should be offered the same day prior to the dawn Prayer of the next day. Third, the day or the night continue for several months. For example, in Norway, close to the North Pole, the day and the night continue for six months each, and so is the case with the South Pole. In such a situation the people of these regions roughly divide up their office hours, or sleeping and working hours or meal hours. Similarly they should divide up their Prayer hours keeping in view the 24-hour panorama of day and night. What is more, they should maintain the same hourly space in their Prayers as is done in normal

circumstances. This phenomenon is rooted in that Hadith which tells us that of the forty days of Antichrist's mischief one day would be equal to one year, one day one month, and one day one week, and the rest of the days like normal days. The Companions asked the Prophet, "What would be the position of Prayers. Would the five Prayers of the year-long day suffice?" The Prophet said, "No, rather you would be required to offer Prayers on the basis of calculated estimate."

Moving forward Maulana Abdullah kissed my forehead and said, "Hazrat, you have described a knotty problem in simple words." I told him, "Maulana, daybreak has occurred at this moment. We should put up the dawn Prayer, so that we may sleep peacefully." All of us offered the Prayer after performing ablution and went to sleep following a brief meditation. When we woke up after about four hours it was still the time of daybreak on the horizon. We performed ablution and started our day with the Qur'aan reading. The sun rose only after we had taken our breakfast. We so eagerly saw the rising sun as a bridegroom lovingly looks at the face of his bride.

Pleasure Cruise

Maulana Abdullah said to me, "Hazrat, the gate of the mosque will open at the time of the noon Prayer. We have ample time. If you please okay we may cruise about certain places of Leningrad by ship." I said, "All right. We have to

remember Allah whether on the ground, or on the surface of water." When we reached the nearby harbor we saw that a ship was full of tourists. We bought the tickets and when we boarded the ship its doors were immediately closed. Maulana Abdullah said, "Hazrat, these people were only waiting for us", to which I replied that, according to Urdu poet Galib,

دل کے خوش رکھنے کو غالب یہ خیال اچھا ہے

he could cherish this idea if it so pleased his heart.

We took our seats in the ship and close to us were sitting ethnic Russians who so keenly started gazing at us as if we were some museum pieces. The ship had sailed a while ago that the captain announced: "Today is a special day of the Russian Navy. The naval forces have put up a unit for exhibition and we shall narrowly sail past it. If the passengers want to view to view the exhibition they should come up on the deck. On hearing this announcement all the passengers rushed out of their rooms and reached the deck. When we looked down the surged sea dauntingly emerged in our view, and when we looked up the overcast sky with all its limitless expanses gave us a feeling that we were not even worth a speck of dust. And cruises of the Russian Navy stood right and left. From a close range I happened to see an armada, a missile-equipped warship and a long queue of torpedoes. That was an absolutely new experience for me. Sunk in a reverie I

was turning the pages of history when I recollected a hadith which says, "Let this happy news be given to a group of the Muslim community who will wage the first naval jehad that they are destined to go to paradise, and as compared to the ground jehadists, they shall get double the reward." For it history prizes Amir Muawiyah (R.A) because it was in his reign that the Muslim army won laurels for waging the first naval jehad.

Marching out of Africa general Tariq-bin-Ziad too had reached as far as Gibraltar and faced the crusading forces. History stands witness that when the Muslim forces disembarked at the Lion Rock the commander-in-chief commanded them to put all the boats to fire and consequently they were reduced to ashes. Tariq, on this occasion, made a speech, saying that to retreat was not possible. "Now there are only two ways left to us, either to gain victory or to face death", he added. This provided such a tremendous impetus to the zeal of the Mujahideen that they pounced upon the enemy soldiers, chopping them off right and left. This encounter served as a prologue to the establishment of Muslim rule over Spain. After the war someone talked to Tariq with reference to the rash act of burning the boats and asked if he had no thought of returning to his homeland. To this he replied,

ہر ملک ملک ماست

کہ ملک خدائے ماست

"Every country is our country because it belongs to our God."

Wishful Thinking of a Girl

I was still lost in deep thoughts when Maulana Abbdullah approached me and said that a teenaged girl was standing near me. She has told me, "This man is possessed of some magnetism. My heart stimulates me that I should keep gazing at him." Maulana Abdullah introduced me to her and said that she should become my disciple. But she said that she wanted to become my wife. I told Maulana Abdullah, "These non-belivers take the contact between a man and a woman as a synonym of passing time. But Islam presents it as life partnership. Call her to the religion of Islam. I will pray for it. Maybe Allah will illumine her heart with the light of faith." Maulana Abdullah gave her moral advice and religious instructions for a while and she told him, "This man has prompted me to think about Islam. But I am alone and all of my kith and kin are atheists and Communists. How can I get myself called as Muslim before them? Still I am too young and only a school girl." I said, "Maulana, tell her to become Muslim by uttering the two Testifications of Islam 'There is no deity but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah' and leave her matter with Allah. This will by the grace of Allah, not go waste and Allah will protect her faith." She

drew near me and said in a low voice, "All my relatives are present here, I want to embrace Islam. What should I do?" I made her utter the two testifications of Islam and told her to keep in touch with Maulana Abdullah. "Settle up other details through correspondence", I said. The girl immediately wrote down her address. I told Maulana Abdullah to try to find out a Muslim young man to marry this girl. Maulana Abdullah told the girl that her acceptance of Islam had given immense pleasure to me. "Tell the Shaykh to fulfill my heartfelt desire by accepting me as his wife as well", she blurted out. I said to her, "Allah is All-Powerful to link you up with a life-partner who may be thousand times better than me. At present concentrate on you study and then see how Allah creates a situation conducive to your convenience and adjustability. Let me pray for you." I said this and lifted my hands in prayer, beseeching Allah with tearful eyes for the protection of her faith. Afterwards she asked Maulana Abdullah as to why the Shaykh was shedding pearl-like tears. To that the Maulana replied, "He was praying for your good future." On hearing this, the girl heaved a deep sigh and said if she were a boy she would have remained devoted to him throughout her life. I told her,"Banish this unachievable wish from your heart. Instead love Allah and spend your life in His remembrance." She said that my words of advice had given her peace of mind.

Meanwhile, the ship captain announced that passengers should remain on their seats. So we got back to our seats. Abu Uthman said to me, "Hazrat, if you stay longer in Russia a lot of people will become Muslim." I said, "Friends from Central Asia who have been designated by me as my deputies are primarily supposed to spread here the light of *Nisbat* (energy-line of the Order). The Creator Who can get some work out of a spider or mosquito can also accept us, the humble men, for the propagation of the religion."

Window of the West

The ship captain announced that the passengers would be provided some information regarding Leningrad. Equipped with one hundred museums the city has the most superior underground rail system in the world. The Russians have built underground cities to seek protection against the possibility of a nuclear attack. This city is called as the Window of the West because if a ship keeps sailing in this sea for a few hours the Swedish seaport, Stockholm, will burst upon one's view. Abu Uthman said to me, "Hazrat, have you ever been to Stockholm?" I told him, "Oh yes, I have visited it many a time." Ravil Tajuddin smiled and looked at me significantly. When I wanted to know what lurked behind his peculiar facial expressions, he told me, "Hazrat, you. are a global Shaykh (Shaykh-ul-Alam). When you journeyed from Pakistan towards the West, you got to Sweden, whereas your

journey towards the East took you to Leningrad. These two countries face each other. To put it like this, you went round the globe for the sake of Islam." On this Maulana Abdullah uttered aloud, "God is Great."

Inner Side of Lenin

The ship captain announced that Lenin's palace was situated on our right side and all eyes turned to it immediately. There came to my sight a vast and magnificent palace built on the seashore which was just awe-inspiring to the onlookers. Maulana Abdullah told me, "The interior of the palace is extremely beautiful with its gilded enamel work exquisitely done on its ceilings and pillars." That indeed concretely depicted the lifestyle of Lenin who was a self-acclaimed champion of the down-trodden.

I told Maulana Abdullah, "Please tell me one thing. Commoners are spending here a life of privations and misery with barely livable, small and narrow houses. Contrasted with them were those who preached the Communistic gospel of human equality yet they themselves lived a life of luxury in grand palaces. Was it a true equality?" The Maulana candidly said it was certainly not. Thereupon I observed if the world wanted to look at the true facet of equality the only recourse to it was to get back to the exemplary life of the Prophet of Islam. Following in his footprints alone could the afflicted humanity get peace of mind.

In the Trench battle a Companion tied a stone to his belly under the stress of severe hunger, whereas the Prophet of Allah tied two stones to his belly. Moreover, during digging the trench all attempts made by the Companions had failed to break up a rock. The matter was taken up with the Prophet ﷺ who gave it three blows with a pickaxe and it split into fragments. When Abu Bakr Siddique ؓ, to carry on the argument, was invested with caliphate, he would take as much allowance from the public treasury as was given to a common Muslim. Once caliph Umar ؓ was presented a beverage to drink, "Is it available to every Muslim?", he asked. He refused to drink it when he was given a reply in the negative. The Communists pursued a strange double-faced policy towards theory and practice. Behind the facade of there much-trumpeted gospel of human equality lay the suppression of the masses with a vicious determination to perpetuate there iron-fisted rule over them. After seven decades, however, this tyrannical situation came to a boiling point when the Leningrad citizen, getting beside themselves, tied up Lenin's statue with strings and dragged it on the roads.

ظلم پھر ظلم ہے بڑھتا ہے تو مٹ جاتا ہے

Inherent in tyranny, it has been observed by sages, is the seed of self-destruction.

After a few days' stay in Leningrad we set out for our next destination.

Visit to Kutsa Muksha

Kutsa Muksha is further from Leningrad and is the last city on the Russian border. Previously it was part of Finland but Russia, during the II World War, annexed it and extended her frontiers. Ethnically its people are of the Finnish stock but now they are known as Russian citizens. We saw no Muslim in this city. With the combined effort of some men and women a club was founded here. To meet in a city hall once a week, eat and drink, have a rap session and then to leave for their homes was their set practice. Most of them had high educational background. Once a female member of the club, namely Nuriya, saw a dream in which a man of God told her to think about Islam as well. Next day she related her dream to her club fellow. All of them were of the opinion that they should embark on gleaning facts about Islam. Yet two female club members who had morbid aversion for Islam vehemently opposed the proposal. Since most of them evinced academic interest in Islam it was decided that some Muslim should be invited to the club so as to enlighten them on Islam. Once a male club member happened to visit Moscow where he came across Ravil Tajuddin. He invited Ravil Tajuddin to visit the Kusta Muksha club and give them a talk about Islam.

Ravil Tajuddin briefed me about this matter and immediately made up my mind to visit the place. An eight-hour rail journey took us form Leningrad to Kusta Muksha. It was already a nightfull there and we prayed our evening

prayer. We carried with us enough foodstuffs yet our host offered us boiled vegetables. We took meal to our fill and fell asleep soon. The meeting was scheduled to be held in the hall of a local hotel at ten 'o clock next morning. All the club members were awaiting us when we got to the venue. Nuriya, in her capacity as club president, introduced me to the audience and simultaneously said, "We request the worthy guest to enlighten us on Islam." I talked about Islam for an hour and this was followed by a question-answer session of the same duration. Nuriya came on the stage and said, "The lecture of the worthy guest has infused into our hearts a new sense of destination and all of us want to become Muslim." Ravil Tajuddin uttered "Allah is Great." I made all of them pronounce two Testifications of Islam and suggested Muslim names for them. Later I instructed them in the essentials of the religion for two hours. Nuriya said, "When you people pray your Prayer we shall take photographs of it so that it may be easy for us to understand genuflexion and prostration etc. even during your absence." For this purpose they arranged for a photographer. As soon as he entered the door and saw me he yelled out delightfully, "Last night I saw you in a dream. You were exactly dressed in these clothes." Nuriya said, "He is our Shaykh." That man told me, "Please first convert me to Islam and then I will do any thing else." So I made him utter the two Testifications of Islam too. We were scheduled to travel back the same day. At four 'o clock

in the evening all the club members reached the railway station to see us off. When the train was about to move, all of them burst into weeping. Maulana Abdullah and Ravil Tajjuddin became tearful too. Nuriya got close to me and said, "Shaykh, you are taking our hearts along with you. Never before anybody might have tearfully said goodbye to some relatives on this platform as we are saying to you. How have we got into such a love with you?" I told her, "This is the magnetism of Islam, which unifies hearts of believers as Allah says in His Book :

ان الذين امنوا و عملوا الصلحت سيجعل لهم الرحمن ودا

"Verily, those who attain to faith and do righteous deeds will the most Gracious endow with love"

(Qur'an 19:96)

A few minutes before the train's departure I made the audience pray to God and told them, "Our elders, at the time of departing from each other, would recite Surah Al-Asr (The Declining Day). In pursuance of their practice I am reciting the Surah to you too." Thereafter I gave utterance to the translation of this Surah, saying: "If we remain alive we shall, God willing, see each other, and in case of the occurrence of death our meeting will take place on the day of Judgment. I consign all of you to the care of Allah.

فا الله خير حافظ وهو ارحم الراحمين

'(Nay) but God's guardianship is better (then yours), for He is the most merciful of the merciful' (Qur'an 12:64).

My words shook their hearts and tears started raining from their eyes. This emotional scene imperceptibly moved my heart too. We however took leave of each other with heavy hearts and tearful eyes and got into the train for Moscow. The club members' looks clearly betrayed that they had had not enough of the visual pleasure of our visit to them when the drop-scene overtook them.

JOURNEY TO UKRINE

It was on the Friday of 24 July when at 11 p.m. we left Moscow for Kiev. Earlier Ukraine was part of Russia but now it is an independent country. From the viewpoint of military power it is next to Russia. Centuries ago Muslims were in the majority in this country. A Christian ruler came to power and he converted them to Christianity by force and also changed their Muslim names. Those who were reluctant to adopt Christianity they were put to sword. With the passage of time Ukraine became a Christian country. Then Communism swept across Ukraine and turned its people into atheists. But as soon as the spell of Communism was broken they again came in the fold of Christianity. The Muslim ratio to the total population is just nominal. Kiev is the capital of Ukraine and is a big city, but unfortunately there exists no mosque.

We reached Kiev at eleven o' clock in the morning. A striking feature of this place is its unique greenery and natural

beauty. What further lends charm to it are its hugely grand buildings and wide roads with fruit-laden trees. At places we saw that apples and apricots had so abundantly dropped from the trees that the road seemed to be carpeted them but without any obstruction in traffic flow. Ibrahim Adham said that the abundance of fruits made people unconcerned about its being wasted under the wheels of passing vehicles.

We had no acquaintance in Kiev and neither did any mosque exist there, which could provide us a shelter. Luckily Ibrahim Adham was acquainted with a Lebanese religious scholar, Hazrat Tamim. We traced his address and got to him. The first reaction of Hazrat Tamim was surprise as to wherefrom we had come upon him. Then he asked me if I could speak Arabic; to this I replied that I could express my mind in poor Arabic. This touched off a question–answer process for about an hour, during which the host put to me searching questions: "Why have you come here? Which school of jurisprudence do you follow? Where did you get your education? By whom were you given initiatory permission? How does your Order meet the Holy Prophet ﷺ? Aren't you related to any heretic sect? The interesting dialogue continued for some time along with the sipping of tea. When Hazrat Tamim was fully satisfied he sent for his two brothers over the telephone as well. We took a siesta after the noon Prayer. The second sitting took place following the

sunset prayer. Hazrat Tamim asked me to tell them something about the cleansing of heart and carnal soul.

Obviously this topic was after my own heart and so I poured out what I knew from the scriptural texts or had heard from my Shaykhs. The audience came under a state of exaltation. When the discourse was over Hazrat Tamim requested me to bring his entire household as well as his brothers and their familes under an initiatory oath, and that was done accordingly. Ibrahim was overjoyed at this and said, "Hazrat, you have brought forth a fountain of the Naqshbandiah order in this country." Both of Hazrat Tamim's brothers were religious scholars and held Qur'aan-teaching sessions at different places. They expressed the desire that I should also initiate their pupils and instruct them in the invocation of Allah's Name and performance of meditation. I told them that our stay was only for two days and they could assemble all people at a place next day. I said that I would make a discourse as well as hold a sitting of Allah's remembrance and performance of mediation, God willing. Hazrat Tamim said that I should first make them perform meditation. I pinpointed and opened up *lataa'if* (subtle-points) of the audience and got them into meditation. Hazrat Tamim was overpowered by ecstasy during the meditative exercise and after the prayer he said to me, "Hazrat, it is just a beginning and the ecstasy of Allah's remembrance has

pervaded my soul. I don't know where will things lead me to?" I recited an oft-repeated Urdu couplet:

ابتدائے عشق ہے روتا ہے کیا
آگے آگے دیکھئے ہوتا ہے کیا

"You wail in vain, it is only the beginning of love. Wait and see what happens with the passage of time.

Miraculous Working of *Nisbat*

According to the programme, Ravil Tajuddin was to travel from Moscow to Ukraine along with us. The train had moved in time but he did not reach. We were surprised when Ravil Tajuddin had made reservation after buying the ticket, then why he failed to turn up. We were further worried that we ourselves had no idea of our destination, how Ravil could follow us. After half an hour of the train's departure the ticket checker came to me and placed a chit in my hand, saying it was a message for me. When I read it I learnt that it was a telegram from Ravil Tajuddin that read, "I reached late and the train had already left. I have bought a ticket for next train and am coming after you. You wait for me at the Kiev railway station. I shall reach within two hours after your arrival." Accordingly I asked Maulana Abdullah and Ibrahim Adham to receive Ravil at the railway station, They kept waiting for three hours and the train by which Ravil was to

come arrived too. All the passengers had got down and left for their homes but Ravil was seen nowhere. The two gentlemen got bored and disappointed and came back. When I asked them why they had not brought Ravil with them, they told me that despite all their search they could not meet up with him. I was sorry to think that the poor fellow took the trouble of travelling form Moscow to Kiev but could not meet us. At the time of *Tahajjud* (midnight Prayer) I prayed, "O God, untie him with us soon." Next day when I accompanied Hazrat Tamim to a city hall to make a discourse I saw that it was full of people. While I approached the stage I saw the smiling face of Ravil Tajuddin who made salaam to me. To my immense pleasure Ravil was standing before me and we embraced each other like two long-separated friends. I said to him. "How have you reached?" He replied, "Hazrat, let you please first deliver the sermon. Later I will narrate the detail to you." I discoursed for an hour and Hazrat Tamim interpreted me. Afterwards several turbans were fastened together and spread before the audience and they were given the collective oath of repentance with the utterance of initiatory words. After the meditation and prayer were over a question-answer session followed. The audience put interesting questions to me. A young girl, who was a university student, told Hazrat Tamim, "I have been doing the meditation exercise for the last two years. Just now during the meditation I have felt as if a light has emanated from the

chest of this Shaykh and entered my chest. Please tell him that I have been sold at his hands. I have bartered away my heart and soul. I will spend my life on the lines as he suggests to me." I said to her, "Adorn your exterior with the practice of Sunnah and get your heart engaged in Allah's remembrance till you shun heedlessness every moment." Once Allama Suliman Nadvi (a towering soul of the subcontinent) asked his spiritual guide, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (a renowned divine), "Hazrat, what is the object of *Tasawwuf* (Sufism)?" He said, "You should invoke the Name of Allah so much that the falsehood of sins oozes out of your every pore." Hazrat Tamim was very happy with this reply. The audience expressed their gratitude to Hazrat Tamim for having brought them into contact with an adept Shaykh. It has been truly observed that if you enough to come under the guidance of a man of God, his long path will shrink up for you within two steps.

Miraculous Story

When the mediation and collective prayer were over I met with people and Ravil Tajuddun also got closer to me. I said to him, "How did you reach here?" He said, "I had made a request to God through your agency and it was accepted. As I left home after getting ready for the journey I was late to reach the railway station. The train had started moving when I reached the platform. None could see through my regretful heart when I was only a few meters away from the moving

train. I went to the inquiry office and was told that the next train would leave Moscow for Kiev after two hours. I got a seat booked on that train and informed you by telegram. When I alighted at the Kiev railway station, none of you came to my sight there. I searched you for about an hour but in vain and I lost all hopes of benefiting from the blessings of this journey. The Kiev railway station is so huge that a common man would get lost in its maze. I thought that you people would be waiting for me on some other platform, while I was on the lookout for you somewhere else. Feeling fatigued I hired a room in a hotel. After offering my midnight prayer I beseeched Allah with lamentations and supplications through your agency.

After taking breakfast I was to go back to Moscow by train. I got into a bus and when I wanted to take ticket the driver told me that it won't go to the railway station. I realized my mistake and thought that I would alight on the next stop. When the bus stopped Mr. Mohammad Ashraf got into it. We were both surprised to see each other.

I said to him, 'What brings you here?' He said, 'I have come to see Hazrat but have no idea of his whereabouts.' I told him, 'I have also come to see him but I am unaware of his whereabouts.' We both decided to get down on the next stop and take a right bus to reach the railway station. When we alighted on the next stop we saw a cap wearing man was going. On our inquiry he told us that Muslims scholar was to

deliver a lecture in a nearby building and he was going there for participation in his meeting. We thought in our mind that most probably it would be you to deliver this lecture. Upon our arrival here we came to know that in fact you were to make a discourse and this made us overjoyed. When I saw you it occurred to my mind that in answer to my midnight supplication through your agency God had joined us." I told Ravil, "In fact it was your sincerity, which had made it easy for you to reach your destination."

Foundation-Stone of Kiev Mosque

When Ravil Tajuddin completed his episode Hazrat Tamim said to me, "Muslims have no mosque in this city. We have started our religious activities at the hired places. But as soon as Christians are tipped off that we impart religious education they expel us. We have changed three or four places. Now we have bought a piece of land for the construction of a mosque. Kindly pray for Divine help in the completion of construction work." I said. "Let us go to the mosque site and pray there as well." All the friends were filled with happiness to hear this. Riding in several vehicles we reached the site. While going our way Ibrahim Adham said, "Hazrat, when we entered the city yesterday, nobody knew us. But today, within twenty-four hours, our caravan is moving like the marriage party of a bridegroom." Maulana Abdullah said, "You have exactly said a right thing. Our

Hazrat always looks in the form of a bridegroom." I said, "Maulana, it is enough. Don't talk this way." The Maulana said, "Hazrat, you are included among those people, as goes a Hadith, الذين اذا رؤوا ذكر الله that the sight of their face makes one remember Allah." Giving a turn to the conversation I said that we would have here a recitation sitting, that is, *Khatam Khawjgan* and also perform meditation so that by virtue of its blessing this place might develop into human habitation at earliest. The mosque site exits atop a hill from where the whole city can be overviewed. During the meditation I exercised spiritual influence over all the citizens. When the meeting was over all the audience prayed for the mosque's construction with lamentations and supplications. Hazrat Tamim told me, "Hazrat, my heart is satisfied that now this mosque will be built very soon. I thought that we would be able to begin the construction work next year. May God reward you for getting the work started from today!" I said, "Hazrat, our Shaykhs have said the construction of a mosque and the marriage of a daughter are two such tasks that even if you set a date without preparation, Allah strengthens your hands to cope with them satisfactorily. Nobody has ever felt regret regarding these two tasks." Hazrat Tamim wildly embraced me to hear this. Ibrahim Adham said to him, "Please don't press my Shaykh so vigorously." He replied, "My friend, not yours alone he is mine too."

Departure for Kharkov

Kharkov is Ukraine's second major city in the outer suburbs of which exist factories, which manufacture military equipment. Russia's first atom bomb was made in this very city and her first tank was also manufactured here. Mohammad Rafiq Tatar, a good friend of Ravil Tajjuddin, lived in this city. B[illegible]ad persuaded me to visit his home for a day. Accordingly we left Kiev at midnight and reached Kharkov at ten o' clock in the morning. Mr. Muhammad Rafiq [illegible] come to the station to receive us and he took us straight to his home. A long, ceaseless journey had made us [illegible] tired and we were soon overpowered by deep sleep on an empty stomach. We prayed our noon Prayer very late. We had conversation with Rafiq Tatar for some time till it become mid-afternoon and we offered our Prayer. Immediately after this we had our meal. Later Mohammad Rafiq voluntary said that he wanted to become my disciplie and for this I made him utter the initiatory words and perform a brief meditation. He said that he would like to travel along with me, and to it I agreed. We readied ourselves for the journey and reached the railway station after the sunset Prayer. We were to leave Kiev for Moscow but had no booking. This upset my companions about the availability of seats but my heart was satisfied. There I came across Umar Afghani who instantly said to me, "I am not known to you and you need no introduction. Looking at you from head to

foot I have come to believe that you are a Shaykh. Kindly pray for me and accompany me to my home where kababs of halal meat are ready for you." I apologetically told him, "We have short time. By undertaking the night journey we want to reach Moscow and from there extend our journey to Bashkirstan."

During this conversation the time of night Prayer came upon us and we prayed our congregational Prayer at the railway station.

Godsend

When the Prayer was over Ravil Tajjudin told us that the train had arrived at the platform. I told him, "Let us go to the conductor guard and request her to okay our seats for Moscow." She was an aged ethnic Russian woman. Ravil told her that we need seat. But she flatly refused saying that not even a single seat was vacant. He looked to me and said, "Tell her that we have with us a guest and we urgently want to go." The woman guard again refused. An ethnic Russian girl was standing close to us and listening to our conversation. She came forward and told the conductor guard, "Don't refuse this man." The conductor guard again said that she had no vacant seat. When the girl asked her if there could be any possibility of it, the conductor guards said that her senior officer was present in the next compartment of the train and he might have some seats. The girls said to her, "Please put your signature on a chit and I will go and talk to

him." The conductor guard put her signature on a small chit she hurriedly took to the next compartment. Looking towards me Ravil said, "Shaykh, if the seats are not available on this train, we shall have to go by the next train." I told him, "My job is to pray and to give spiritual attention. God will surely open up the way."

In the meantime that young girl came running back and putting a chit into Ravil's hand she gasped out that she had managed to get four seats for us.

This prompted the conductor guard to say, "Why have you done so for their sake?" She said, "I want to claim the prayers of this guest." I told Ravil to ask her to pour out her heart. She was surprised and said that she had a dream last night, "I am present at a railway station and you are standing there and seeking some special Divine favour for me with raised hands. I have come here from a distance of 60 Kilometers and the whole railway station I have come across only you people of such appearance. I wanted to request you for prayers but I was somewhat hesitant. The conductor guard's refusal to you, I should say, provided me a good chance to help you so as to have your prayers. Since I have brought you four seats, please ask this Shaykh to pray for me." Accordingly I prayed for her right conduct and solution of her problems. She made salaam to me with a manifestation of devotion.

Meanwhile, the train gave its first whistle. Maulana Abdullah told me, "Hazrat, please go on this train and we shall be following you." I said, "Maulana, I will get a seat even afterwards, you people should go. If you see me off, you may not possibly get seats till tomorrow." Ravil Tajuddin agreed with me. Accordingly we made our four companions board the train. I, Maulana Abduulah and Ravil Tajjuddin remained behind so as to come on the next train. When the second whistle went, our companions had boarded the train and Russian girl standing at the door was gazing at me. On the third whistle the train started moving. Ravil told me that the train had moved away from the station, yet the Russian girl was continuously waving her hand as a gesture of salaam.

I said to Ravil Tajuddin, "Did it ever happen to you as well that some unknown non-Muslim was helpful to you in your work?" He replied in the negative. I told him, "It is the blessing of Allah's Name that I meet with helpers as a situation requires. To quote an Urdu couplet,

ہے عیاں آج بھی یورش تاتار کے افسانے سے
پاسباں مل گئے کعبے کو صنم خانے سے

his is something evident from the episode of ferocious Tatars who rose from paganism and became the defenders of Islamic faith."

The second train came after two hours. Ravil hurriedly went up to the conductor guard and told her that we needed

three seats. She said, "I have no seats." He told her, "We want to go today urgently. You look for the seats and then give me the reply." Meanwhile two passengers came out of the compartment, saying that they were going to dismount from the train. Ravil said to the conductor guard, "Well, two seats are decided but what about the third?" She asked, "Who third?" He pointed to me. The conductor guard kept looking at me for some time and then said, "I will let him sleep in my room." We people boarded the train. The conductor guard got me asleep on her bed and she herself spent all the night by sitting on the chair. Next day we reached Moscow at 10 am. On our inquiry about the first train, which preceded us, it was discovered that it was a stopping train and would arrive at this very platform after ten minutes. We put our baggage at a place and stood in wait for its arrival. When the train came and Ibrahim Adham and other companions saw us standing on the platform, they were surprised and said to me, "Hazrat, have you come by air." I told them, "No, we have come by train but God has hastened our arrival." We all thanked God Who made it easy for us to cover such a long journey in a short period of time.

Transit through Moscow

Return journey from Kharkov took us to the Moscow railway station at 9 am. I told Maulana Abdullah, "Since we have to set out on a tour of Tatarstan tonight, we had better

buy our tickets from here before going to the historical mosque. Accordingly Maulana Abdullah and ravil Tajjuddin went away for buying tickets and we stood in a corner near the luggage. Two ethnic Russian girls came and stood close to us. I closed my eyes and went into meditation while standing. After a while Amir Timur burst into laughter which startled me and I opened my eyes. I asked him what was the matter. Pointing to the girls he said, "First both of them kept looking at you, whispering with each other, and then on of them said, 'What a handsome man he is! How attractive he is! Tell him to marry one of us.' I replied, "Tell them that real attraction is in Islam and Faith and the practices of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. If both of you utter two Testifications of Islam the Creator will start loving you. Blessing after blessing will descend on your life." Both of them replied that for the first time they had heard about the religion of Islam. I told them to contact the Imam of the historical mosque and get further information about Islam. They said, "We have been impressed by heart and nothing prevents us from becoming Muslim." I told them, "Well, then utter the two Testifications of Islam." They requested to me to make them do so. I had hardly made them utter the two Testifications of Islam that the train gave its whistle. The girls said, "Our train will move within a few moments. We will make contact with the Imam but what will be the possibility of communicating with you?" Pointing to Ravil Tajjuddin I asked them to take his phone number, adding that he lived in Moscow. Amir Timur quickly jotted down the phone number on a piece of paper and both

the girls hurriedly went over to the other platform. Amir Timur came near and said, "Hazrat, here young men infatuatedly seek after such femme fatales. But to my surprise, they were fawning upon you servilely." I told him to hear two verses and then render them into Russian to the relish of other companions:

و وکانی ہاں تیڈے نام پچھوں
نئیں تے کون کمینی نوں جاندا ہائی
میڈے گل پٹہ تیڈے نام والا
تیڈے نام کوں جگ سنجاندا ہائی

"My acceptability counts only for Your Name, otherwise nobody would care for a scum like me. The collar of Your Name is round my neck, and the whole world is aware of your Name."

On the arrival of Maulana Abdullah and Ravil Tajjuddin we went to the historical mosque where Amir Timure related with relish the incident of the two girls.

Ibrahim Adham told me that when we were visiting the Czar Museum in Leningrad a woman came to him and said, "This man seems to be the king of some country." He replied, "Yes, he is the king of spiritual domain." When her husband said to Adham who were his bodyguards, he replied, "We are the six men." The stranger said, "Then it is all right. Such men are a gift to our country, they should be held in esteem."

CHAPTER 8

JOURNEY TO TATARISTAN

A ten-hour train journey, beginning at 10 pm, took us form Moscow to Gorki which is the first major city of Tatarstan. This region inhabited by ethnic Tartars had been the cradle of Islamic civilization in the past but unfortunately most of its young people were weaned away from their Islamic roots and led to sensual pursuits by the Communists in the wake of the Russian Revolution.

When we got down form the train we began to consult one another what we should do because nobody was acquainted with us in Gorki. Ravil Tajjuddin and Maulana Abdullah cast interrogative glances at me. I asked them to tell me whose guests we were. "We are the guests of Allah", they said. I told them to tell me by which name we called Allah's House, "The mosque", was their reply. I told them we should then unhesitantly go to the mosque and God would play host to us. All the companions were struck with this idea and they

happily got ready to go to the mosque. But the next problem, as Maulana Abdullah pointed out, was to find out the location of a mosque. I told him that it was no problem. "Go and inquire from a few cab-drivers and some one will certainly take us to the mosque", I added. Within minutes Ravil found a driver who took half an hour to drop us at the gate of a splendid mosque. Ibrahim Adham quickly carried the luggage to the door but to our disappointment, it was locked. Now again all the companions turned their looks to me. I said, "Imagine that we are like beggars and standing at the door of an Emperor's place. We should call out (pray within our hearts) to Him and He will definitely devise a way to get the mosque unlocked."

GORKI CITY

The Gorki City is situated at the seacoast. Such a severely cold wind was blowing here that within minutes, while standing outside, we were chilled to our bones. The icy wind coming from Siberia was piercing through our chests. Within a few minutes a man, appearing from the inside of the mosque, came to the door and said to us. "Who are you and what do you want?" Maulana Abdullah said, "We were going to Kazan and got down here for a few hours so as to see our Muslim brethren." He unlocked the door and let us in. When we entered the mosque we felt such comfort in the warm atmosphere of the room as a fish has in water. We had

conversation for a while, then we all went to sleep and got up at midday. As soon as we performed our ablution, the Imam-Khateeb of the mosque, Maulana Umar, came. He had read Hadith at the Bukhara-based Madresah Mir Arab and knew the ulema and divines of Uzbekistan. When Maulana Abdullah disclosed to him that the Grand Muftis of Samarkand, Namangan, Qoqan, and Jambole and other had been initiated by me, he too expressed his eagerness to be initiated. I told him that I would give him the initiatory oath after the noon Prayer. Maulana Mohammad Umar was a young theologian with the light of his heart illumining his face. After a brief introduction he went home and came back with freshly cooked, hot meal. Owing to severe hunger we started eating meal avidly and when we finished it there was call for Prayer in the mosque.

Mosque Turned into Godown

Maulana Mohammad Umar told me that the mosque was built in 1905 with a majestic and tall minaret adding to its impressive beauty. The Communists pulled down the minaret and turned the mosque into a godown. After emancipation from the Communist's rule the minaret has been rebuilt and the mosque opened for five-time Prayers. Maulana Mohammad Umar was planning to establish a madresah at the open space attached to the mosque. After the noon prayer I made a discourse with specific emphasis on the

... establishment of ...ic seminaries. Apart from the general ... the Maulana seemed to be distinctly moved by my sermon as his tearful eyes betrayed. At the end of the discourse Maulana Mohammad Umar announced that those who wanted to take the initiatory oath should catch at this cloth. Accordingly, all the audience, along with Maulana Mohammad Umar, adopted my discipleship. I assigned Maulana Abdullah to describe the six practices of the Order in detail. When Maulana Abdullah did the requisite, one of the locals, a Tatar, told Ibrahim Adham that he looked to be an ethnic Russian. He replied "Yes, I am a humble disciple of the Shaykh too." A request came to Adham from the same person to relate in detail the incident of his initiatory oath and his meeting with the Shaykh. The audience went into raptures when Ibrahim Adham painted in bright colours what had led to his meeting with me as well as the incidents of the journey. When the meeting was over all the worshippers kissed Ibrahim Adham's forehead, whereas they considered me a true representative of the Naqashbandiah Order at whose hands even the ethnic Russians were accepting Islam. Ibrahim Adham told the audience that he had met me at a time when I was sitting in front of the Kremlin and acting upon the hearts of the rulers. Maulana Mohammad Umar was much excited to hear this and he told me that he would give me a ride in his car so that prior to my departure I should exert my spiritual

influence on the hearts of the local rulers too. Since we were scheduled to reach the station after three hours, the Maulana drove us to the city. The flourishing armaments industry, according to Maulana Umar, is a salient feature of the Gorki city where guns, tanks and aeroplanes are manufactured on a large scale. I also saw there an ordinance museum. There is a Tatar saying that money is made in Gorki, while Moscow and Leningrad spend it. Gorki is an impressively beautiful and clean city. At the time of my visit to Gorki a Jew was its administrator but Christian missionaries were actively engaged in their work.

Maulana Abdullah gave us his opinion that since we had arrived in the city, we should buy food for the night journey. I sent Maulana Abdullah and Maulana Umar for this purpose. Within minutes passers-by clustered round me. A woman asked Ibrahim Adham who I was. He told her that I was his Shaykh. She said, "Some questions arise in my mind and I seek their answers." I told her that it was a good thing. "The Muslims believed", the woman said, "the Prophet Jesus Christ عليه السلام was alive and lived in the heavens whereas Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was buried in the grave. This suggested", she added, "that the former had excellence over the latter." I said to her, "Keep two things in your mind. First, trans-terrestrial things are not necessarily always superior. For example, birds fly above in the air and sit on the tress, yet can't be rated above man. Furthermore, foam covers only the surface of the

sea but at its bottom are pearls and diamonds. Staying in the heavens is therefore not suggestive of excellence. Second, it is the Christians who say that Jesus Christ suffered the Crucifixion and the Muslims, on the other hand, believe that he was lifted up alive to the heavens. If you agree to the Muslim belief, you should also accept this thing that he would descend near doomsday and spend his life as a follower of our Prophet ﷺ. She submitted to this strong argument and said that I had removed her confusion.

On return Maulana Umar took us to the top of the minaret from where we overlooked the view of the whole city. A river flows near the city, the water of which iced up in winter. Specific spots are marked off in this river where tourists, coming form long distances, go skating. Our train was to move off after the sunset Prayer, so after saying our mid-afternoon Prayer, we carried our luggage and reached the railway station.

STAY IN KAZAN

We received public stares when we prayed the sunset Prayer in congregation at the platform. We boarded the train at the right time. Ibrahim Adham who had gone to bring water came back after a long while. When asked about the reason of his being late, he replied that a man of Jewish faith approached him and asked, "Who is that man holding a staff?"

Ibrahim Adham: "He is my Shaykh."

Jew: "Why are you with him?"

Ibrahim Adham: "I am his interpreter."

Jew: "We and you are ethnic Russians. The Muslims come here for the propagation of their religion. You should waste their time and money by giving them wrong advice."

Ibrahim Adham told me, "I avoided arguing and came back without saying a word." I told Ibrahim Adham that Jews and Hindus were the sworn enemies of Muslims and quoted the following Qur'aanic verse

اشد الناس عداوة للذين أمنوا اليهود والذين اشركوا

"Of all men you will find the Jews and those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity to be the most hostile to those who believe. (5:82)

Ibrahim Adham asked me if there could be a possibility of living together with them. I told him that it could be possible only in that case when we followed them as the Qur'aan says :

ولن ترضى عنك اليهود ولا النصارى حتى تتبع ملتهم

"Nor will the Jews be pleased with you, nor the Christian until you follow their way." (2:126)

Maulana Abdullah said, "Hazrat, what else can be the more tenable argument than it?"

The city of Kazan had been a major place of Islam in bygone days. That thirty thousand new books were produced

on Islam in a year was reflective enough of the magnitude of ulema who lived in this city. A Muslim scholar Hamzah Bey belonging to this very city had printed a copy of the Holy Qur'aan in Leningrad. Temperamentally the people of Kazan are inclined to practice Islam and they take pride of their Tatar roots too.

The Turkish ulema are building mosques and madresahs on a large scale in this city and Saudi financial aid is being profusely pipelined to it besides. We reached Kazan's principal mosque and met with its Imam-Khateeb. But to our surprise he showed indifference to us, perhaps on the presumption that we had set foot on the Tatarian soil to spawn innovations. Complying with Maulana Abdullah's request the Khateeb said that he could permit only a fifteen-minute discourse, adding that he would himself interpret the discourse. When the discourse was over the audience rose to their feet and went away. I was surprised to think that it was only first occasion during my whole trip when nobody entered the fold of the Order. The Khateeb shook hands with me and went away. Meanwhile, Maulanna Abdullah divulged to me that the Khateeb, while interpreting me, had told the audience, "To take the initiatory oath is not necessary. If at all you want to do so, you should come into contact with your local Shaykhs. An outsider's visit to any alien country is just a fleeting moment and one cannot pin hopes on it on a permanent basis." "For this very reason people left after the

prayer", Maulana Abdullah said. I told him, "Maulana, if it is the Will of Allah that the Order should come into circulation, nobody can stop its way." We were still talking that a young man came and told Maulana Abdullah, "I am a student of this madresah and five students, including myself, want to become disciples of this Shaykh. They are waiting in the staircase-room." So I went there and administered the initiatic oath to them.

Diabolical Tactics

We were to leave for Ufa after the sunset Prayer. We asked several people by which way one could go to Ufa. 'By air' was the reply of everybody. None was certain or knew if train journey was possible I looked at the map of Russia and saw that the cities of Kazan and Ufa were close to each other. Yet on having asked people I felt as if a long distance stood between them. I suggested to Maulana Abdullah that we should go to the bus station so as to get further information. Accordingly we reached there by a taxi. I got into the manager's room and asked him how we should go to Ufa. He told me that I should go by air. When I asked about any alternative means, he said, "Excuse me, there is no other way in my knowledge." When I asked for a map of the railway lines he took it out of a file and gave me. To my surprise I saw that there was only a distance of 300 kilometers between the two cities. But the Communist mind thought that if the

people of the two cities kept up their mutual contacts, they would remain entrenched in their socio-religions patterns. In order to weaken their strength and sense of cohesion a plot was hatched up that the two sides should be permanently kept as poles apart. With this purpose in view the Communist rulers avoided to build a road or lay a railway track between the two cities. As for the air travel a commoner can hardly afford it. Consequently a gap of seven decades led the people of two cities to alienation from each other. I put the railway lines map before me, trying to see what was the possibility of going by train. I came to know that by changing two trains on the way we could go to Ufa. Accordingly by taking a 1000-Kilometers-long journey we reached a city which was only 300 kilometers away from the place of our departure.

Stay in Ufa & Roses

The beautiful city of Ufa is the capital of Tataristan. We happened to see such fascinating views in its suburbs that the following Qur'aanic verse spontaneously came on the tip of my tongue:

فتبارك الله احسن الخالقين

"So blessed be Allah, the Best of Creators (19:23)"

There goes a Hadith that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had much liking for green, flowery places and streams and

rivulets, and from amongst flowers the rose fascinated him most. His passion for the observance of Sunnah instilled into the mind of Maulana Qasim Nanotvi رحمه الله, (a renowned divine of subcontinent) a natural liking for the rose too. This flower was eagerly planted in the garden of Deoband Daar-ul-Uloom (a famous seminary) under his instructions. An acacia tree was also planted there as a token of devotion to the Prophet ﷺ because it was an acacia tree under which he had given the Companions رضي الله عنهم the oath of fealty which was indeed a prologue to the historic Hudaybiah Treaty.

Known by different names in world languages the rose, history tells us, had preceded even Prophet Adam's advent in the world. While digging up an ancient river-course in America a rose plant has been discovered which, according to a geological estimate, is thirty million years old. The rose, going by Greek mythology, used to be the indispensable requirement of idol worship, particularly its offering was made to the goddess of Venus. The Roman kings would present the rose as a gift to the bravest general.

Prior to committing suicide Mark Anthony had made a will to Cleopatra that his grave should be covered by roses. When for the first time Cleopatra invited Mark Anthony to her palace she had got rose-petals scattered all over the paths. There was a knee-high bed of rose-petals in the room where the banquet had been arranged. Omar Khayyam, famous poet-mathematician of Iran, had great liking for roses too. When

the celebrated Edward-FitzGerald, who turned Omar Khayyam's quatrains into English, died in 1883, a rose-cutting was specially sent for from the Iranian poet's grave and planted at that of the English translator as a token of devotion to his memory. References to the rose and its beauty frequently occur in Shakespeare's poetry and plays. The tribute which Abbasid ruler Mamun-ur-Rashid received from Narastan included three thousand bottles of rose-water as well. Emperor Babar had got planted ten thousand rose plants in the well-known *Bagh-e-wafa* (Garden of Loyatly) of Afghanistan. What is more, he had also named his daughters after the rose (called *Gul* in Persian) --- Gul Badan, Gul Chehrah, and Gul Rang etc. Empress Nur Jehan had an exclusive liking for the rose too.

Depending on the records of history we may drop here a word that first of all rose scent was prepared in Pakistan's city of Lahore. Dilating on the subject of roses it will not be out of interest to mention here that Choa Saidan Shah (Pakistan) and Akbarabad (India) are known places for growing roses. Furthermore, it is not specific to kings and poets alone, the general people too give names to their children after the rose (called Gulab in Urdu) --- Gulab Singh, Gulab Din, Gulab Rai, for example. The Gulab Devi Hospital in Lahore (Pakistan) illustrates the ongoing argument as well. Setting aside the historical references, a Muslim likes the rose

simply for this reason that it was the liking of his beloved Prophet Muhammadﷺ.

To revert to our point, when we got to the central mosque we learnt that its complex also housed the secretariat of the Grand Mufti of Tataristan. But a task had taken him outstation. We, however, met with the Deputy Mufti. He requested me to deliver the Friday sermon and I agreed. Maulana Abdullah interpreted me. I received a rapturous ovation from the audience. The fact is that nowhere else during my whole trip any audience had raised slogans so tumultuously in acknowledgement of my performance. I my self had a feeling of inspiration. After the Prayer Maulana Abdullah told me, "Hazrat, today's sermon was really of historic importance and it would stay long in the memory of the Ufa people. You have captured their hearts." People streamed into my discipleship and exhausted me by embracing me and kissing my hands and forehead.

An Old Woman's Gesture

After the Friday Prayer Ravil Tajjuddin reminded me that since we were to take the air journey from Ufa to Tashkent tomorrow, we had better buy the tickets today. When we took meal, four people, including myself, went to the airport. Ravil Tajjuddin thought that my ticket in dollars would be very expensive, whereas other tickets would cause less expense. But the female booking clerk issued all the

tickets against roubles. On my inquiry she said to me, "As a rule a foreigner's ticket is issued against dollars which is two hundred times more expensive than that of a local. But since I have issued your ticket, you may please travel on it. The Station Manager is my friend and I will be able to get special concession from him." I thanked God for it. On making a calculation I discovered that this favour had saved me as much money as had been spent on travelling the different cities of Russia.

We four people were talking to each other that an old woman came and stood close to us. Maulana Abdullah asked her what she wanted. She said, "You are four and I am the fifth." We all spontaneously laughed. Ravil Tajjuddin said, "This woman has expressed here love in beautiful words." I said, "Now we are supposed to pray for her guidance. God may possibly turn her Muslim and include her among the faithful on the Day of Judgment."

Penitent Air-hostess

On return I reinvigorated the *Lataa'if* (Subtle points or hidden faculties) of my companions. Allah's remembrance had pervaded the heartbeat of Amir Timur and a five-hour meditation was his daily routine. When Ravil Tajjuddin wore Arabic long-shirt and turban he looked strikingly handsome. Ibrahim Adham came out more intelligent than I had thought. The Sunnah dress has caught his fancy so much that now it is

a cherished hobby with him to persuade people to give up the English dress and take to the Prophetic pattern. During the journey many ulema were impressed by this conversation and came into the fold of the Naqshbandiah Order. Abu Uthman has reticent nature but has surpassed his fellow-disciples for being regardful of the Awareness of Heart (*Waqoof-i-Qalbi*).

On Saturday we reached the airport, got our boarding cards and entered the lounge. After a while an air-hostess came and started kissing my hands. I hurriedly shrank back and called Ravil Tajjuddin to ask her what she wanted. The air-hostess said, "I want to kiss the hands of this man." When he asked reason for it she said, "My parents were very pious people but I wandered off from the right path. I took to drinking and bad habits. Now my parents are dead. On the sight of this Shaykh I was reminded of my father's exhortations. I see in my vision as if he is telling me to become a devotee of this Shaykh and spend my life by following his dictates." She said this and threw herself at my feet. I moved back and saw that the air- hostess was weeping bitterly in a state of prostration.

We faced a strange situation because the Shariah taboo restrained us from touching her body and making her stand on her feet. After some time I asked Ravil Tajjuddin to tell her to rise and listen to my advice. So she lifted her head. I made her sit on the nearby seat telling her to repeat the words of repentance, and thereafter she joined the Order. Ravil

explained to her the detail of spiritual formulas and exercises to be taken by her daily and she asked him to seek a small favour from me. "What is that", she was asked. She said, "If I cannot touch the body of the Shaykh I should be allowed to kiss his clothes and put them against my eyes. Perhaps my sins would be blotted out by this blessing." Maulana Abdullah told me, "Hazrat, this is permissible by the Shariah. She will feel unburdened. Please do not forbid her." I had to remain silent. Moved by devotional feelings of the girl Amir Timur started weeping aloud. All of us became tearful. When the departure of the flight was announced we boarded the plane heavy-heartedly. We felt relieved only after reaching the Tourism Hotel of Tashkent.

Within three days we completed our preparations for the next journey and the plane took us to Daghestan.

CHAPTER 9

IN CAUCASIAN LAND

The Russian-dominated territory of Daghastan is home to the lion-hearted mujahideen who firmly braved the Red Revolution and indeed prevented the unwholesome influence of modern civilization from pervading their society. Mostly it is a mountainous land with lush greenery and natural beauty of its own. People are just unimaginably beautiful. With their dark-blue eyes, black hair, rosy complexion and round-shaped faces they seem to be symbolizing the ideal beauty of poets. For their bewitching beauty its women are proverbially called the fairies of the Caucasus. While looking at the beautiful, delicate children one is reminded of Prophet Yusuf's proverbial beauty. What is more, the inner beauty of these people eclipses their physical beauty. They are so pious and God–conscious. Most Daghestanis are agriculturalists by profession with an abundant growth of fruit being an

additional source of their livelihood. Moreover pasturing their herds of cattle supplies them with meat and milk. Every Daghestani village or settlement has a mosque madresah. Interestingly the masses also speak Arabic fluently. Ulema and pious men are mostly available in Daghestani society. Religious education is compulsory for every child. Divested of every taint of Western obscenity and immorality, these people are habitual of living a pious and God fearing life in a remote society.

Historic Resistance

When the Red Revolution broke out in Russia and an anti-God wave, rippling form Leningrad, swept across the Amu Darya the Daghestani ulema launched jihad. The spiritual influence of Naqshbandi divines infused a new spirit into jihad efforts. For forty years the Russian forces struggled hard against the guerrilla warfare but in vain. Earlier in the 19th century Imam Shamil had started a resistance movement (1834-1859) and the heroic deeds of the mujahideen, who fought under his leadership, became part of history. Despite the paucity of resources and economic hardship they remained steadfast and dedicated to their right cause. The Russian leadership announced to stop the hostilities, saying that the honour of the Daghestan people would be maintained without interference with the practice of their religion.

Furthermore, they would be given self-rule with the following three conditions:

1. The army will be under the Centre
2. There will be only one common currency.
3. The Russian language will be adopted as a medium of mutual contact.

Symbolically speaking, it meant a blow to the pride of Russian imperialism and despite being besieged by the Communists the Muslims of Daghestan kept the practice of Islam. Certainly one would call it a marvel of Islam in today's world.

Undiluted Model of Islam

When accompanied by Maulana Abdullah, Ibrahim Adham and Ravil Tajuddin I landed at the Daghestan airport, Maulana Mohammad Rasul was already present there to receive us. Thursday was spent in meeting with the local ulema.

People had already been informed that I would deliver the Friday sermon. I discoursed on Allah's love which was much appreciated by the audience. A large number of people came into the fold of the Naqshbandiah Order. After the Friday Prayer we took meal and set off to visit the *basti*

(village or small town) where Maulana Mohammad Rasul lived.

It was an enjoyable hilly journey with cascades, pastures and winding tracks intermittently coming to our sight and this filled our heart with pleasure. It took us three hours to reach the *basti* which stood in a valley surrounded by hills. The lifestyle of the locals was analogous to ancient Arabs and it adequately reflected the Companions' picture which emerges in our vision after reading their life history.

All people without exception were punctual about the performance of their five times Prayers with a stress on observing the Shariah and Sunnah, and interestingly they preferred to speak in Arabic instead of their indigenous language. Most of the houses were spacious and wide and almost every house had a stable for cattle. Horse riding and donkey riding was a common sight. In order to eat the roast meat they skinned an animal in full and put it on live coals for roasting. The women were strictly purdah-observing. As the muezzin gave Prayer call the mosque was filled with people within no time and it seemed as if people were coming from their homes to offer their Eid Prayer. Silence and coolness pervaded the atmosphere, the air was dust-free and the general sight of people wearing the Sunnah dress gave us the impression as if we were sitting in a monastery.

After taking tea at the residence of Maulana Mohammad Rasul 1 asked him to tell me something about the local Shaykhs. He told me that there was only one Naqshbandiah Shaykh but he was bed-ridden. "For a long time he has been unable to give initiatory oath to seekers", he added. I proposed to enquire his health. When we reached his home he embraced me. As 1 focused on his *Lataa'if* he became beside himself. Maulana Mohammad Rasul and other fellow were disturbed over it. 1 told them to keep patience because the Shaykh would soon regain consciousness. After a few minutes the Shaykh kissed my hands and told me that he wanted to divest me of my spiritual states but 1 took precedence over him in this regard. "1 want to become your disciple. Please put me on the Sufi path like a learner", he added. To the surprise of the audience this was something unthinkable. The *basti* dwellers just behaved zealously in seeking my discipleship when they came to know that their Shaykh had become my disciple.

After the sunset Prayers 1 made a discourse and Maulana Mohammad Rasul interpreted me. Thereafter the whole audience came into the fold of the Naqsbandiyah Order at my hands and Maulana Mohammad Rasul related to them the incidents of how the Naqshbandiah Shaykh took to my discipleship. 1n order to listen to my sermon an arrangement had been made for the women in a hall adjacent to the

mosque. They sent me chits, saying they wanted to seek *bay' ah* too, and they requested me to explain to them in detail the formulas and exercises of the Order.

After explaining all that I conducted a meditative sitting and brought the audience into the focus of my spiritual attention in the fullest vein. 1 felt such a flourishing spiritual wave in my heart that 1 grew keen to get the chests of the audience deluged with it. I have rarely undergone such an experience in my life. When the meeting was over I told the audience that they should move away after handshake. No doubt some young men simply shook hands with me but as for the old men they just could not contain their devotional passion. To my utter astonishment they profusely kissed my hands, cheeks and forehead. When they embraced me they pressed my chest so strongly that 1 felt as if no young man was equal to them in physical strength. For the first times in my life 1 felt that my ribs should have been stronger still. At long last came the relieving moment when 1 came out of the mosque and reached home. 1 was totally exhausted and remained in this state for half an hour. The host repeatedly asked me if he should lay the table but I kept forbidding him. At last 1 thought the other people would be hungry and I was causing delay for them. So 1 rose to my feet with the support of Maulana Abdullah and Ravil Tajjuddin, sat down at the table and took meal. Maulana Mohammad Rasul told me

thereafter that the young girls of the *basti* had assembled in the large room of his house and were eager to listen to my special sermon. Girding up my loins I started discoursing and soon the audience was completely enraptured. The wife of Maulana Mohammad Rasul later told him that the young girls had wept so bitterly that their chadors were drenched with tears. This memorable night will indelibly go down in the annals of Daghestan.

Return Journey

Next day we got back to Tashkent by air. Abbas khan told me that my ticket had been issued for return journey on Saturday. Now I had three days at my disposal and in order to make the best use of it I started a three-day refresher course. From morning to evening we spent our time in a sort of retreat. For most of the daytime I instructed my companions in Mujaddid's teaching as enunciated in his famous Epistles. We were very particular about the performance of *Tahajjud* Prayer. I exceedingly entreated Allah for His forgiveness because ulema say it is a prerequisite to the acceptability of any good deed in the sight of Allah. Perhaps it is for this reason that after uttering the Prayer-ending greeting it is Sunnah to utter aloud *Allah-ho-Akbar* (Allah is Great) for once and *Astagh-firullah* (I seek Allah's forgiveness) for

three times as Allah tells His beloved Prophet ﷺ in the Qur'aan

فسبح بحمد ربك واستغفره انه كان توابا

"Extol your Sustainer's limitless glory and praise Him, and seek His forgiveness. Surely He is ever ready to accept repentance. (110:3)

In His Book Allah drops a reference to the different Prophets in these words :

كانوا قليلا من اليل يهجعون وبالا سحارهم يستغفرون

"They used to sleep but little of the night, and before the dawning of each day would seek forgiveness. (51:17–18)

When we reached the Tabani Office on Saturday at eight o' clock in the morning, Dr. Mansoor brought two vehicles. On our arrival at the airport we saw the local ulema were already present there to say goodbye to us. The airport staff was surprised to see that people belonging to *Uzbekistan*, Tajakstan, Kazakstan, Moscow, Ukraine and other countries stood with me. Interestingly the uniformed security guards also participated in the farewell prayer which was conducted by me. A man asked me how people of different ethnic and territorial backgrounds had attached to me. I told him Islam had such magnetism that it joined hearts together as the Qur'aan says:

ان الذين امنوا وعملوا الصلحت سيجعل لهم الرحمن ودا

"On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will (Allah) Most Gracious bestow Love. (19:96)

When after booking my luggage I wanted to go towards the lounge, most of the friends saw me off with tearful eyes and sad hearts. Yet on the other hand I was sadly disappointed with my worthlessness and inefficiency that I could not do justice to the performance of the duty which had been assigned to me by Providence. The following Urdu verses befit my position:

"What is the use of worrying about more and less? We are nobody to boast of doing any work. Whatever took place, was reflective only of Your Graciousness and whatever will be done, will again be emanating from Your Grace alone."

Soul-searching

When the PIA plane landed at the Karachi airport some loving souls were already present there to receive me. After staying in the Sindh metropolis for two days I returned home. Peace and rest at home provided me a moment of soul searching on the events of my long journey. I imagined the position of a sweeper who is ordered to clean and broom the court of an emperor. During brooming the sweeper touches the special chairs as well and even mounts the throne. He looks at everything from a close angle but after this short

lived elevation he finds his previous position unchanged. A sweeper should remain within his limits. Similarly I was commanded to visit and sojourn in Central Asia. During this journey I visited the shrines of many a Shaykh and also experienced the Divine blessings from a privileged position. But on return I found myself in the same position as it was prior to embarking on the journey. I am equally supposed not to forget my worth. May this journey be accepted in the sight of Allah! A Persian poet says:

شاہاں ہاں چہ عجب گر بنوازند گدارا

"No wonder if kings treat beggars magnanimously"